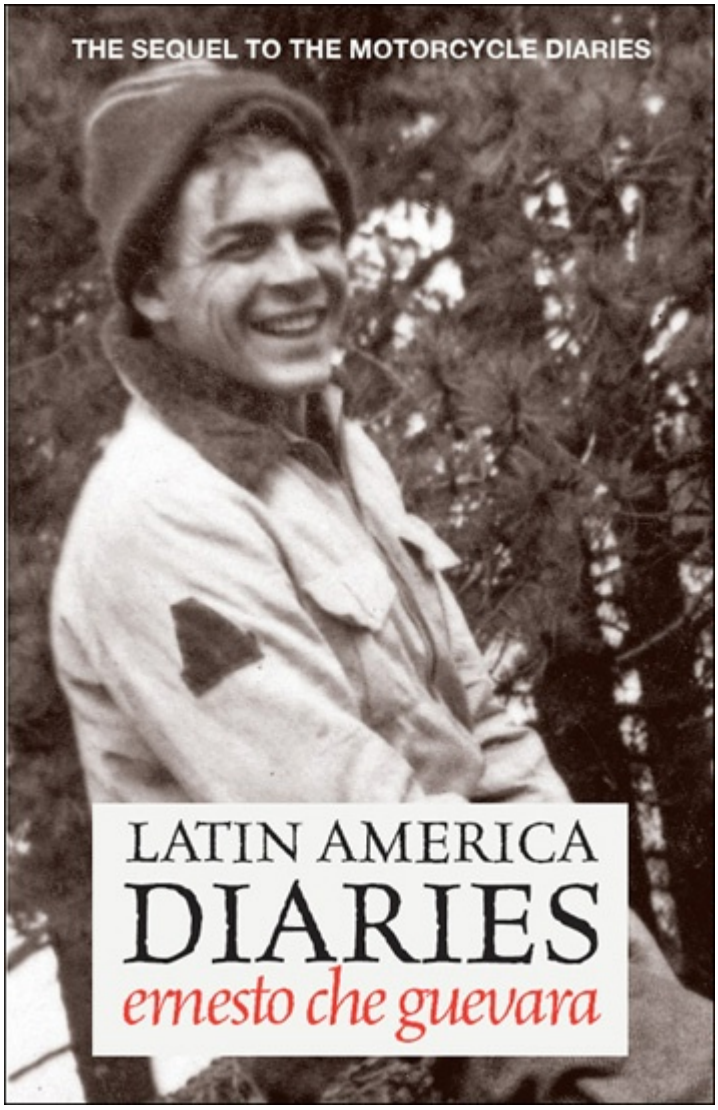
THE SEQUEL TO THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES
LATIN AMERICA
DIARIES
ernesto che guevara

Latin America Diaries

CHE GUEVARA PUBLISHING PROJECT

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The Awakening of Latin America

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

Latin America Diaries

Otra Vez or a second look at Latin America

Foreword by Alberto Granado

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Cover image: Ernesto Che Guevara on Popocatépetl volcano, Mexico

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Chronology of Ernesto Che Guevara

June 14, 1928 Ernesto Guevara is born in Rosario, Argentina, of parents Ernesto Guevara Lynch and Celia de la Serna; he will be the oldest of five children.

January–July 1952 Ernesto Guevara travels around Latin America with his friend Alberto Granado on the motorbike, *La Poderosa*. The journal from this trip is posthumously published as *The Motorcycle Diaries*.

March 10, 1952 General Fulgencio Batista carries out a coup d'état in Cuba.

July 7, 1953 After graduating from medical school, Ernesto Guevara sets off again to travel through Latin America. He visits Bolivia, observing the aftermath of the 1952 revolution, and Peru where he revisits the Inca city of Machu-Picchu.

July 26, 1953 Fidel Castro leads an unsuccessful armed attack on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba, launching the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the Batista regime.

December 1953 Ernesto Guevara meets a group of Cuban survivors of the Moncada attack in San José, Costa Rica.

December 24, 1953 Ernesto Guevara arrives in Guatemala, then under the popularly elected government of Jacobo Árbenz.

January–June 1954 While in Guatemala, he studies Marxism and becomes involved in the community of Latin American political exiles who are active there. This group includes exiled Cuban revolutionaries and Hilda Gadea, a revolutionary intellectual from Peru.

June 27, 1954 President Árbenz resigns in response to a military coup by Carlos Castillo Armas that was part of the CIA's "Operation Success."

August 1954 Mercenary troops backed by the CIA enter Guatemala and begin the brutal repression of Árbenz supporters. Ernesto Guevara seeks political asylum in the Argentine embassy in Guatemala City.

September 18, 1954 Ernesto Guevara reaches Mexico after fleeing Guatemala. He finds part-time work in the Children's and General hospitals and supplements his income with photography and some editorial work for Agencia Latina (an Argentine press agency).

July 1955 Ernesto Guevara meets Fidel Castro in Mexico City and immediately agrees to join the planned guerrilla expedition. The Cubans nickname him "Che," an Argentine term of greeting.

August 18, 1955 Ernesto Guevara marries Hilda Gadea in Mexico. Their daughter, Hildita, is born the following February. The marriage soon falls apart.

June 24, 1956 Ernesto Guevara is arrested along with a group of Cuban revolutionaries, rounded up by the Mexican government to thwart a supposed conspiracy to assassinate the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. Ernesto is one of the last to be released from prison and, defying an order to leave Mexico, goes underground.

November 25, 1956 Eighty-two combatants, including Che Guevara as troop doctor, sail for Cuba aboard the *Granma.*

December 2, 1956 The *Granma* reaches Cuba at Las Coloradas in Oriente Province. After an initial setback, the guerrilla struggle begins.

December 28, 1958 Che Guevara's guerrilla column initiates an audacious attack on Batista's forces in Santa Clara.

January 1, 1959 Batista flees Cuba. Santa Clara falls to the Rebel Army. Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos arrive in Havana the next day.

January 8, 1959 Fidel Castro arrives in Havana.

February 9, 1959 Che Guevara is declared a Cuban citizen. He is later appointed head of the Department of Industry of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) and president of the National Bank of Cuba and takes major responsibility for the industrialization and transformation of the Cuban economy.

March 14, 1965 Che Guevara returns to Cuba after a tour of Africa and shortly afterwards drops from public view.

April 1, 1965 Che Guevara delivers a farewell letter to Fidel Castro. He subsequently leaves Cuba on a Cuban-sponsored internationalist mission in the (former Belgian) Congo, Africa.

November 21, 1965 Che Guevara leaves the Congo, and begins writing up his account of the mission, which he describes as "a failure."

December 1965 Fidel Castro arranges for Che Guevara to return to Cuba in secret. Che Guevara prepares for the expedition to Bolivia.

November 4, 1966 Che Guevara arrives in Bolivia in disguise.

March 23, 1967 The first guerrilla military action takes place with combatants successfully ambushing a Bolivian army column.

April 16, 1967 Che Guevara's Message to the Tricontinental is published, calling for the creation of "two, three, many Vietnams."

May 1967 US Special Forces arrive in Bolivia to train counterinsurgency troops of the Bolivian army.

October 8, 1967 The remaining 17 guerrillas are trapped by army troops and conduct a desperate battle in El Yuro ravine. Che Guevara is seriously wounded and captured.

October 9, 1967 Che Guevara and two other captured guerrillas are murdered by Bolivian soldiers following instructions from the Bolivian government and Washington. The remains of Che Guevara and the other guerrillas are secretly buried in Bolivia.

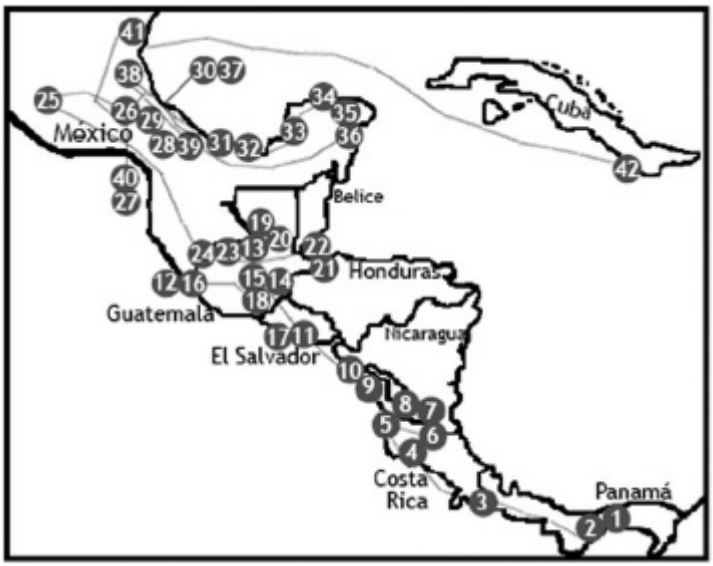
July 1, 1968 Che Guevara's *Bolivian Diary* is published in Cuba and is distributed free of charge to the Cuban people, while it is simultaneously published in many countries.

July 1997 Che Guevara's remains are returned to Cuba and buried in a memorial in Santa Clara, along with the remains of other guerrilla fighters who died in Bolivia.

First part of Ernesto's trip (Latin America)

1. Buenos Aires
2. La Quiaca
3. Villazón
4. La Paz
5. Lake Titicaca
6. Puno
7. Cuzco
8. Machu-Picchu
9. Lima
10. Tumbes
11. Bolívar (Port)
12. Guayaquil
13. Esmeralda
14. Balboa
15. Panamá City

Second part of Ernesto's trip (Central America)



1. Balboa (port)
2. Panamá City
3. Golfito
4. Puntarenas
5. San José
6. Liberia
7. Alajuela
8. La Cruz
9. Rivas
10. Managua
11. San Salvador
12. Guatemala City
13. Amatitlán
14. Chimaltenango
15. Tiquisate
16. Guatemala City
17. San Salvador
18. Santa Ana
19. El Progreso
20. Jalapa
21. Quiriguá Vieja
22. Puerto Barrios
23. Lake Atitlán
24. Chimantenango
25. León (Guanajuato)
26. Puebla
27. México City
28. Popocatépetl (5,450m)

29. Iztaccíhuatl (5,286m)
30. Veracruz
31. Lake Catemaco
32. Coatzacoalcos River
33. Campeche
34. Mérida
35. Uxmal
36. Chichén-Itzá
37. Veracruz
38. Córdoba
39. Orizaba
40. México City
41. Tuxpan
42. Las Coloradas (Cuba)

Editorial Note

One of the main aims of the editorial project created by the Che Guevara Studies Center (Havana) together with Ocean Press and Ocean Sur publishing houses is to recover historical memory as an indispensable tool for new generations seeking to establish a more just and equal world, a world representing the interests of the great majority.

The book we offer here to readers belongs chronologically to the writings of the young Che, its antecedent being the journals he wrote during his first trip around Latin America, between late 1951 and August 1952 [*The Motorcycle Diaries*].

A year later, on July 7, 1953, this young man, newly graduated as a doctor, headed off again for those countries that had already captured his imagination and would determine the future course of his life. It is therefore not surprising that Ernesto gave the title *Otra vez* [once again] to this new diary.

When one starts to read this book, it becomes clear immediately why he chose this title. On page after page he draws us into his ever-growing commitment to "Our America" (as José Martí called it) and challenges us to reflect on moments and circumstances we sometimes ignore because of our daily routine.

Otra vez is a thought-provoking book, full of clues that allow us to gain an understanding of the meaning and impact of Che's life, his thought and his actions. It shows what gradually leads him to the path of revolution, how he makes it his own, with his characteristic questioning, hesitation, tentative answers and grappling with theory and praxis in an attempt to understand the world and his role in that world. Despite the good and bad times he describes, his great love of humanity emerges through the impressions and experiences he relates.

In these pages, he is no longer simply a spectator to events but an active participant for whom there can be no turning back. As the pages unfold, we discover a man who, from the beginning to the end of his life, demonstrated a moral stature of immense proportion. Undoubtedly, it helps us understand not only the coherence of his actions and thought from early on, but also why the icon he became has had such a broad appeal for so many people and movements in the struggle to make a better world.

This edition has been revised, corrected and expanded with original documents held at the Che Guevara Studies Center in Havana in order to create a book with which young people can identify in these uncertain times.

* * *

In this new edition, due to their historical significance, we have reproduced letters Che sent to his family and his friend Tita Infante, articles written for newspapers and journals, poems and interviews that were published in the various countries he visited in order to augment the narrative of his diary of this second journey through Latin America.

Also included are news reports from Mexican newspapers of the imprisonment of Che along with a group of key Cuban revolutionaries (among whom was Fidel Castro) who were making preparations for the liberation struggle in Cuba.

The footnotes in this edition were added by the Che Guevara Studies Center, but some of the footnotes to the letters are taken from his father's (Ernesto Guevara Lynch) book, published as *Aquí va un soldado de América* in 1987. Unfortunately, it is impossible to explain all those people and events referred to in this diary and the letters.

Myrna Torres, who is now resident in Cuba, collaborated in the revision of the parts of this diary that cover the period in Guatemala and Mexico.

Where the diary and letters have been excerpted this is indicated by elipses in square brackets.

This diary was left incomplete because of Ernesto's momentous decision to join the Cuban revolutionaries in their struggle for the liberation and total independence of their homeland. On November 25, 1956, Ernesto (now called "Che") left Mexico with the Cubans who were about to initiate a guerrilla struggle against the Batista dictatorship.

The voyage on the leaky cabin cruiser *Granma* and the first encounters with Batista's troops are the opening chapters of his *Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War* (Ocean Press, 2006).

Ocean Press

A Note to the Reader

This book, originally published in Spanish as *Otra Vez* [Once Again], is a text of an intimate or testimonial character, indispensable to penetrate the iron-willed personality that Ernesto Guevara de la Serna forged for himself with the written word as his constant accomplice. Laced with his irony and his wit is a deep perceptiveness of his surroundings in his quest to discover the Americas, offering us a multi-dimensional panorama of his own future imbued with thought and action.

This diary was preceded by the other reconstructed chronicles of his first trip around the continent of Latin America with Alberto Granado, so full of youthful spirit, in which he describes "the joyful impulse that overcame us to be lost on the horizon of the Americas."

This second travel diary offers to readers the prelude to the development of the fully formed revolutionary Ernesto became. It might have been reworked as a more polished manuscript as was the case with *The Motorcycle Diaries* but that did not happen for various reasons. Nevertheless, the publication of this book provides an invaluable historical legacy testifying to crucial events during Che's travels through "Our Great America."

To assist the reader, we have added a number of letters and appendices so that the full profundity and tone of the young author's reflections and viewpoint become evident as he charts the course of his future, a future that becomes forever linked to one of the most important events of the 20th century, the Cuban revolution.

In his eagerness to immerse himself in his surroundings, Che's passion for writing was always vitally complemented by his photography. This book, therefore, also includes previously unpublished photographs of his travels, as living testimony of the diversity of his experiences and his desire to record them as images that express his fine sensibility and passion to capture everything that excited him.

Che Guevara Studies Center
Havana

Foreword

Alberto Granado

It is a difficult task to write the foreword to a book whose author's work and life made him a paradigm of a human being. One faces the temptation to transform that person into some kind of myth that is unrelated to the reality of his life. This challenge is even greater when one had the great fortune of participating in those "extravagant dream trips" into concrete reality.[1]

Those of us who enjoyed his friendship and were close enough to perceive the moral and intellectual qualities that set him above the ordinary run of humankind should, however, always remember that he was a man and only a man, not a mythical being.

Bearing this in mind, I accept the responsibility as an old friend—from as long ago as October 1942—of presenting this diary of his second Latin America journey, which with some premonition he gave the title "Otra Vez" [Once Again].

In this vivid account, the reader constantly encounters the flesh-and-blood Ernesto Guevara with all the temerity of his 25 years. Various aspects of the emerging personality are revealed, as he sets out to confront all the challenges of the journey along with his friend Carlos Ferrer (Calica)2: "two distinct wills extending out into the Americas, not knowing exactly what it is they seek, nor in which direction it lies."

Nevertheless, once the decision has been made to leave the beaten track offered by Venezuela in order to discover and participate in the revolution then underway in Guatemala, the change occurring in him becomes more palpable; now a certain confidence emerges that he has found the path he had been seeking.

While his first trip through South America served to deepen his ideas about social distinctions and sharpened his consciousness of the need to struggle against them, this second journey consolidates his political understanding and fires a growing need for further study in order to grasp more clearly why and how such a struggle should be waged so that it culminates in a genuine revolution.

In my mind's eye, I remember the good-bye from his family and friends who did not understand the reasons for his departure, yet they went through the motions appropriate to members of their class of farewelling someone leaving in search of new horizons—although in this case he was breaking all the group norms and contradicting all established schemas.

I see him dressed in Argentine army fatigues: tight pants, rough shirt and boots with the laces certainly untied, not as a sign of carelessness but in accordance with his scale of values in which external show is not the most important.

Hanging out of the second-class compartment with a broad smile, holding high his almost shaven head (always the "*pelao* Guevara"[3]), he departs Buenos Aires station and enters history.

From this moment, he notes down everything he considers important, the pages of his diary becoming something of a fascinating kaleidoscope of a constant symbiosis of the literary stylist and the insightful observer.

He gives a graphic description of the countryside around the Bolsa Negra mine [in Bolivia] and then comments: "But the mine's heart was not beating. It lacked the energy of the arms of those who every day tear from the earth their load of ore, arms that on this day, August 2, the Day of the Indian and of Agrarian Reform, were in La Paz defending the revolution."

In this passage, we can see succinctly what was already becoming axiomatic for Ernesto: the importance of the human being in all aspects of life. But at the same time, such comments reflect the great beauty of a talented writer.

Another striking aspect of this early diary is the great variety of activities Ernesto undertook on this short trip. He goes from lecturing about teacher training at the University of Buenos Aires to speaking about research with the eminent Spanish physiologist P. Suñer, a victim of persecution by the Franco regime.

He had a series of discussions (often disagreements) with prominent individuals. He drew up a critical balance sheet after each discussion that shows a remarkable insight, even half a century later.

Arriving in Costa Rica, he met several exiles, including two who would later play a significant political role as presidents of their respective countries. Certainly, his discussions with Juan Bosch from the Dominican Republic and Rómulo Betancourt of Venezuela instantly raise the question of how this unknown young man with an unassuming manner, yet incisive and critical in dialogue, could break through the circle of officials surrounding these figures.

The answer to this question is not easy; but the fact is that these discussions did take place and Ernesto's conclusions from them could not have been more accurate.

In a few words, he describes Bosch as he was during his time in government. And he anticipates with pitiless realism how Betancourt would later conduct himself, both as president of Venezuela and leader of the Acción Democrática electoral machine, in handing over his country's great wealth to the US transnationals.

The diary is not lacking in joy or vitality, and along with the man of ideas, we find the lively young man full of energy, sensitive to the presence of women, capable of giving the "*negrita* Socorro" some affection and comfort without betraying himself, while at the same time being able to judge their encounter in its true colors.

The account of his time in Mexico is extraordinarily important because of the wide range of his interests it reveals. He visits museums, admires the murals of Orozco, Rivera, Tamayo and Siqueiros, tours the fascinating Aztec pyramids, without forgetting his real objectives. Along with his fascination with Mexican culture arises his decisive and irreversible commitment, as he puts it, "to lead the life of a proletarian."

Thus, he does not allow himself to be tempted by offers of help from Ulises Petit de Murat, Hilda [his wife], Petrone or his own aunt Beatriz, who would set him on a bourgeois path. He maintains his proletarian status with "the ordinary chain of hopes and disappointments" that characterizes the life of that class during the struggle for real power.

This new attitude to the political problems around him is clearly shown in a discussion with a group of Argentine exiles in Mexico. They want to send a message of support to the new government in Argentina that has emerged after the overthrow of Perón. In this meeting, Ernesto argues that before giving their support to the government, they should wait until it has delivered "something definite with regard to trade union democracy and the running of the economy."

Along with this proletarian consciousness arises an ever-greater sense of human solidarity. Just as during his first trip when he shared his overcoat with a couple of workers on a freezing night on the Chilean Altiplano, now in Mexico, despite his own hardships, he seeks and obtains money (150 pesos) to help his friend "El Patojo" ["Shorty"]4 return to Guatemala where his mother needs his financial and emotional support.

The final pages of the diary make perfectly clear the three main lines of conduct that have marked the first decades of his life: his interest and ability in science; his wanderings among curious travelers and his study of nature and civilizations in the company of friends; and his need to participate in a genuine revolution.

With regard to science, he comments on the presentation in Guanajato of his work on allergies and considers the option to do research work and human medicine. At this time, when he is writing about his future, he also refers to the idea of meeting the Granados in Caracas, and although he considers this a possibility, it is more of a passing thought than a concession to the pleas of his friends. What is especially clear to me is that his behavior and attitude is already very different from that of "*Fuser*" with whom he shared some unrepeatable moments in 1952. His desire for travel and research is still there, but you can sense his iron conviction not to become a semi-scientist, semi-bohemian, semi-revolutionary. Now he is ready to make a great decisive leap.

Through one of those accidents of life, it was during that difficult month of July [1955] that he first met Fidel Castro, finding in him the strength and support he needed.

And if it is said that this diary gives little space to a meeting that would be so important for the future, would I be wrong in thinking that in writing those lines, he said to himself, paraphrasing the words of "the Master" [José Martí]: "There are some things that must remain in silence."

Alberto Granado
Havana
August 1998

1. Alberto Granado was Ernesto's traveling companion in his first trip around Latin America in 1951-52.

2. Carlos Ferrer (Calica) was a childhood friend from Alta Gracia, Córdoba.
3. *Pelao:* close-cropped, one of Ernesto's nicknames.
4. Julio Roberto Cáceres Valle.

Latin America Diaries

Otra Vez or a second look at Latin America

Departure

The sun falls timidly against our backs as we walk through La Quiaca's bare hills.[1] I turn recent events over in my mind. The departure, with so many people, quite a few tears, and the peculiar looks from those in second class at the profusion of fine clothes, leather coats, etc. of those who came out to farewell two strange-looking *snobs*[2] loaded down with so much luggage. The name of my sidekick has changed—Alberto is now Calica[3] — but the journey is the same: two distinct wills extending out into the Americas, not knowing exactly what it is they seek, nor in which direction it lies.

The sparse hills, covered with a gray mist, lend color and tone to the landscape. A small stream in front of us separates Argentina from Bolivian territory. Across a miniature railway bridge, two flags face each other: the Bolivian, new and brightly colored; the other old, dirty and faded, as though it had begun to grasp the poverty of its symbolism.

A couple of policemen tell us that someone from Alta Gracia, Córdoba (my hometown as a child), is working with them. This turns out to be Tiqui Vidora, one of my childhood playmates. A strange rediscovery in this far corner of Argentina.

An unrelenting headache and asthma force me to slow down, and we spend three particularly boring days in the village there before departing for La Paz. Mentioning that we are traveling second class elicits an instantaneous loss of interest in us. But here, like anywhere else, the possibility we might provide a good tip ensures a certain level of attention.

Bolivia

In Bolivia now and, after a cursory inspection from both Argentine and Chilean customs, there have been no further delays.

From Villazón, the train struggles north through totally arid hills, ravines and trails. The color green is proscribed here. The train recovers its appetite on the dry pampas, where saltpeter becomes more common. But when the night arrives, everything is lost in a cold that creeps in so slowly. We have a cabin now, but in spite of everything—including extra blankets—a vague chill enters our bones.

The next morning our boots are frozen and our feet hurt. The water in the toilets and even in our flasks has frozen. Unkempt and with dirty faces, we feel slightly anxious as we make our way to the dining car, but the faces of our traveling companions put us at ease.

At 4 in the afternoon, the train approaches the gorge in which La Paz nestles. A small and very beautiful city spreads through the valley's rugged terrain, with the eternally snowcapped figure of Illimani watching over it. The final few kilometers take over an hour to complete. The train seems fixed on a tangent to avoid the city, but then it turns and continues its descent.

It's a Saturday afternoon and the people we have been recommended to see are hard to find, so we spend the time changing our clothes and ridding ourselves of the journey's grime.

We begin Sunday by going to see the people who have been recommended to us and making contact with the Argentine community.

La Paz is the Shanghai of the Americas. Many adventurers and a marvelous range of nationalities have come here to stagnate or thrive in this polychromatic, mestiza city that determines the destiny of this country.

The so-called fine folk, the cultured people, have been surprised by events and curse the attention now being paid to the Indian and the mestizo, but I divined in all of them a faint spark of nationalist enthusiasm with regard to some of the government's actions.[4]

Nobody denies that the situation represented by the power of the three tin mine giants had to come to an end, and young people believe that this has been a step forward in the struggle for greater equality between the people and the wealthy.

On the evening of July 15, there was a long and boring torchlight procession—a kind of demonstration—although it was interesting because of the way people expressed their support by firing shots from Mausers, or *Piri-pipi*, the terrible repeating guns.

The next day there was a never-ending parade of workers' guilds, schools and unions, with the regular song of Mausers. Every few steps, one of the leaders of the companies into which the procession was divided would shout, "Compañeros of such-and-such-a-guild, long live Bolivia! Glory be to the early martyrs of our independence, Glory to Pedro Domingo Murillo, Glory to Guzmán!, Glory to Villarroel!"[5] This recitative was delivered wearily, and accordingly a chorus of monotonous voices responded. It was a picturesque demonstration, but not particularly vital. Their weary gait and general lack of enthusiasm drained it of any vitality, while, according to those in the know, the energetic faces of the miners were missing.

On another morning we took a truck to Las Yungas. Initially, we climbed 4,600 meters to a place called the Summit, and then came down slowly along a cliff road flanked almost the entire way by a vertical precipice. We spent two magnificent days in Las Yungas, but we could have done with two women to provide the eroticism missing from the greenery that assaulted us everywhere we looked. On the lush mountain slopes, which plunged several hundred meters to the river below and were protected by an overcast sky, were scatterings of coconut palms with their ringed trunks; banana trees that, from the distance, looked like green propellers rising from the jungle; orange and other citrus trees; coffee trees, rosy red with their beans, and other fruit and tropical trees. All this was offset by the spindly form of the papaya tree, its static shape somehow reminiscent of a llama, or of other tropical fruit trees.

On one patch of land, Salesian priests were running a farm school. One of them, a courteous German, showed us around. A huge quantity of fruit and vegetables were being cultivated and tended very carefully. We didn't see the children, who were in class, but when he spoke of similar farms in Argentina and Peru I remembered the indignant remark of a teacher I knew: "As a Mexican educationalist said, these are the only places in the world where animals are treated better than people." So I said nothing in reply. For white people, especially Europeans, the Indian continues to be an animal, whatever habit they happen to be wearing.

We made the return journey in the small truck of some guys who had spent the weekend in the same hotel. We reached La Paz looking rather strange, but it was a quick and reasonably comfortable trip.

La Paz, ingenuous and candid like a young girl from the provinces, proudly displays her marvelous public buildings. We checked out the new constructions, the diminutive university overlooking the entire city from its courtyards, the municipal library, etc.

The formidable beauty of Mt. Illimani radiates a soft light, perpetually illuminated by the halo of snow which nature has lent it for eternity. When twilight falls, the solitary mountain peak becomes most solemn and imposing.

There's a *hidalgo* from Tucumán here who reminds me of the mountain's august serenity.[6] Exiled from Argentina, he is the center and the driving force of the Argentine community in La Paz, which sees in him a leader and a friend. To the rest of the world, his political ideas are well and truly outdated, but somehow he keeps them independent of the proletarian hurricane that has been broken loose across our bellicose sphere. He extends his friendly hand to all Argentines, without asking who they are or why they've come. He casts his august serenity over us, miserable mortals, extending his patriarchal, lasting protection.

We remain stranded, waiting for something to turn up, waiting to see what happens on the 2nd. But something sinuous and big bellied has crossed my path. We'll see…

At last we visited the Bolsa Negra mine. We took the road south up to a height of some 5,000 meters before descending into the depths of the valley where the mine administration is located, the seam itself being on one of the slopes.

It's an imposing sight. Behind us, the august Illimani, serene and majestic; in front of us, the white Mururata; and closer, the mine buildings that look like fragments of glass tossed off the mountain and remaining there at the fanciful whim of the terrain. A vast spectrum of dark tones illuminates the mountain. The silence of the idle mine assaults those who, like us, do not understand its language.

Our reception was cordial; they gave us lodging and then we slept. The next morning, a Sunday, one of the engineers took us to a natural lake fed by one of Mururata's glaciers. In the afternoon we visited the mill where tungsten is refined from the ore produced in the mine.

Briefly, the process is as follows. The rock extracted from the mine is divided into three categories: the first has a 70 percent extractable deposit; another part has some wolfram, but in lesser quantity; and a third layer, which you could say has no value, is tipped onto the slopes. The second category goes to the mill on a wire rail or cableway, as they call it in Bolivia; there it is tipped out and pounded into smaller pieces, after which another mill refines it further, before it is passed through water several times to separate out the metal as a fine dust.

The director of the mill, a very competent Sr. Tenza, has planned a number of reforms that should result in increased production and the better exploitation of the mineral.

The next day we visited the excavated gallery. Carrying the waterproof bags we'd been given, a carbide lamp and a pair of rubber boots, we entered the black and unsettling atmosphere of the mine. We spent two or three hours checking buffers, noting the seams that disappear into the depths of the mountain, climbing through narrow openings to different levels, feeling the racket of the cargo being thrown onto wagons and sent down for collection on another level, watching the pneumatic drills prepare holes for the load.

But the mine's heart was not beating. It lacked the energy of the arms of those who every day tear from the earth their load of ore, arms that on this day, August 2, the Day of the Indian and of Agrarian Reform, were in La Paz defending the revolution.7

The miners arrived back in the evening, stone-faced and wearing colored plastic helmets that made them look like warriors from foreign lands. We were captivated by their impassive faces, the unwavering sound of unloading material echoing off the mountain and the valley that dwarfed the truck carrying them.

In present conditions, Bolsa Negra can go on producing for five more years. But its production will cease unless a gallery some thousands of meters long can be linked with the seam. Such a gallery is being planned. These days this is the only thing that keeps Bolivia going, and it's a mineral the Americans want; so the government has ordered an increase in production. A 30 percent increase has already been achieved thanks to the intelligence and tenacity of the engineers in charge.

The amiable Dr. Revilla very kindly invited us to his home. We set off at 4:00, taking advantage of a truck. We spent the night in a small town called Palca, and arrived in La Paz early.

Now we are waiting for an [illegible] in order to be on our way.

Gustavo Torlincheri is a great photographic artist. Apart from a public exhibition and some work in his private collection, we had an opportunity to see him at work. His simple technique supports a more important, methodical composition, resulting in remarkably good photos. We joined him on an Andean Club trip from La Paz that went to Chacaltaya and then the water sources of the electricity company that supplies La Paz.

Another day I visited the Ministry of Peasant Affairs, where they treated me with extreme politeness. It's a strange place where masses of Indians from different highland groups wait their turn for an audience. Each group has a unique costume and a leader—or indoctrinator—who addresses them in their particular language. Employees spray them with DDT as they enter.

Finally, everything was ready for us to leave; each of us had a romantic contact to leave behind. My farewell was more on an intellectual level, without too much sentiment, but I think there is something between us, she and I.

The last evening saw toasts at Nougués's house—so many that I left my camera there. In all the confusion, Calica left for Copacabana alone, while I stayed another day, using it to sleep and to retrieve my camera.

After a very beautiful journey beside the lake, I scrounged my way to Tiquina and then made it to Copacabana. We stayed in the best hotel and the following day hired a boat to take us to Isla del Sol.

They woke us at 5 a.m. and we set off for the island. There was very little wind so we had to do some rowing. We reached the island at 11 a.m. and visited an Inca site. I heard about some more ruins, so we urged the boatman to take us there. It was interesting, especially scratching around in the ruins where we found some relics, including an idol representing a woman who pretty much fulfilled all my dreams. The boatman didn't seem eager to return, but we convinced him to set sail. He made a complete hash of it, however, and we had to spend the night in a miserable little hut with straw for mattresses.

We rowed back the next morning, working like mules against the exhaustion that overcame us. We lost the day sleeping and resting, and resolved to leave the following morning by donkey; we then had second thoughts and decided to postpone our departure until the afternoon. I booked a ride on a truck, but it left before we arrived with our bags, leaving us stranded until we finally managed to get a ride in a van. Then our odyssey began: a two-kilometer walk carting hefty bags. Eventually we found ourselves two porters and amid laughter and cursing we reached our lodgings. One of the Indians, whom we nicknamed Túpac Amaru, was an unhappy sight: Each time he sat down to rest we had to help him back to his feet, as he could not stand up alone. We slept like logs.

The next day we met with the unpleasant surprise that the policeman was not in his office, so we watched the trucks leave, unable to do a thing. The day passed in total boredom.

The next day, comfortably installed in a "couchette," we traveled beside the lake toward Puno.8 Nearby, some *tolora* blossoms were flowering—we hadn't seen any since Tiquina. At Puno we passed through the last customs post, where I had two books confiscated: *Men and Women in the Soviet Union*, and a Ministry of Peasant Affairs publication, which they loudly proclaimed as "red, red, red." After some banter with the chief of police I agreed to look for a copy for him in Lima. We

slept in a little hotel near the railway station.

We were about to climb into a second-class carriage with all our gear when a policeman proposed (with an air of intrigue) that we could travel free to Cuzco in first class using two of their badges. So, of course, we agreed. We therefore had a very comfortable ride, paying them the cost of our second-class tickets. That night, arriving at the station in Cuzco, one of them disappeared without his badge, leaving it in my possession. We stayed in a small dump of a hotel and had a good night's sleep.

Peru

The next day we went to lodge our passports and stumbled across a secret policeman who asked (in that professional tone they have) where the badge was that I had been given the night before. I explained what had happened and handed back the badge. The rest of the day we spent visiting churches, and the next day as well. We have now seen Cuzco's most important sights, if a little superficially, and are waiting for an Argentine lady to change some of our money into sols so we can go to Machu-Picchu as soon as possible.

Now we have our sols, but for 1,000 pesos they've only given us 600. I don't know how much this was due to the Argentine woman, because the intermediary did not appear. Anyway, for the moment at least, we are safe from hunger.

Cuzco, 22 [August 1953]

Pay attention here, *mami*.

This second trip has been most enjoyable, and I almost feel like a rich man, but the impact is different. Where Alberto entertained me with talk about marrying Inca princesses and restoring empires, Calica curses the filth and every time he steps on one of the innumerable [human] turds that line the streets, he looks at his dirty shoes instead of the sky or the silhouette of some cathedral. He does not smell the intangible, evocative things about Cuzco, but only the stink of stew and shit. It's a matter of temperament. All this apparent incoherence —I'm going, I went, I didn't go, etc.—was because we needed them to believe we had left Bolivia. A revolt was expected at any moment and we had the solemn intention to stay and see what happened close up. To our disappointment, nothing eventuated; all we saw were shows of strength from the government which, contrary to everything that is said, seems to me to be fairly secure.

I was thinking of getting work in a mine, but didn't want to stay more than a month; they offered me a minimum of three so I didn't stick to that plan.

Afterward we went to the shores of Lake Titicaca, or Copacabana, and spent a day on the Isla del Sol, the famous sanctuary of Inca times where I achieved one of my most cherished ambitions as an explorer: I found a little statue of a woman in an indigenous burial ground, the size of a little finger but an idol all the same, made of the famous *chompi,* the alloy used by the Incas.

On reaching the border, we had to walk two kilometers without transport; and for one kilometer it fell to me to carry my suitcase filled with books, which nearly broke my back. The two of us and the two laborers had our tongues on the ground by the time we arrived.

At Puno I had a hell of a fight with customs, because they took a Bolivian book from me, claiming it was "red." There was no persuading them that these were scientific publications.

Of my future life I can tell you nothing, because I know nothing, not even how things will go in Venezuela. But we have now got the visa through an intermediary […]. As to the more distant future, I can say I haven't changed my mind about the US$10,000, and that I may do another trip through Latin America, only this time in a North-South direction with Alberto, and this might be by helicopter. Then Europe and then who knows. […]

In these days of waiting we have exhausted Cuzco's supply of churches and interesting monuments. Again my head is full of a motet of altars, large paintings and pulpits. The simple serenity of the pulpit in the Church of San Francisco was impressive, its sobriety contrasting with the grandiosity of nearly all the colonial buildings here.

Belén certainly has nice towers, but the brilliant white of the two bell towers here is stunning, set off by the dark colors of the old nave.

My little Inca statue—her new name is Martha—is authentic, and made of *tunyana*, the Incan alloy. One of the museum staff confirmed this. It's a pity the vessel fragments seem bizarre to us, considering they represent that former civilization. We have been eating better since the payment.

Machu-Picchu does not disappoint; I don't know how many times I can go on admiring it. Those gray clouds and purple-colored peaks, against which the gray ruins stand out, are one of the most marvelous sights I can imagine.

Don Soto received us very well and then only charged us half the cost of our accommodation. But despite Calica's enthusiasm for this place, I'm forever missing Alberto's company. Especially here in Machu-Picchu, I'm always remembering how well our characters complemented each other.

We're back in Cuzco to take a look at a church and wait for a truck to leave. One by one our hopes are dismantled, as the days pass and the pesos and sols dwindle. We had already found a truck, just what we needed, when, with all the bags loaded, there was a huge row over two pounds in weight we honestly did not have. If we had been willing to compromise, we might have come to a deal, but as it was we were stranded until the next day, Saturday. Our first calculation suggests it would have cost us 40 sols more than the bus.

Here in Cuzco we met a spirit medium. It happened like this: In a conversation with the Argentine woman and Pacheco, the Peruvian engineer, the talk turned to spiritualism. We had to suppress our laughter, putting on serious faces, and the next day they took us to meet him. The guy pronounced he could see some strange lights within us—the green light of sympathy and that of egoism in Calica, and the dark green of adaptability within me. He then asked me if something was wrong with my stomach, as my radiations were fading, which left me thinking as my stomach was definitely churning from the Peruvian peas and all the tinned food. A pity I wasn't able to have a proper session with him.

Now we have left Cuzco behind us and after an endless three-day bus journey we reached Lima. For the entire trip from Abancoy, the road followed the ever-narrowing ravine of the Apurimac river. We washed in a small pool barely deep enough to cover us, and the cold was so intense that for me it was no fun.

The journey became interminable. The chickens shat all over the place beneath our seats, and the smell of duck was so unbearably thick you could cut it with a knife. A few punctures dragged the journey out even further, and when we finally reached Lima we slept like logs in a small dive of a hotel.

On the bus we met a French explorer who had been sailing on the Apurimac River when his boat sunk and the current took his companion. At first he said she was a teacher, but it turned out she was a student, running away from her parents' home, and that she didn't know how to swim. The guy is going to face a few troubles ahead.

I went to visit Dr. Pesce and the people from the leprosy colony.9 Everyone greeted me most cordially.

Nine days have passed in Lima, although due to various engage ments with friends we still haven't seen anything extra special. We found a university diner that charges 1.30 a meal, which suits us perfectly.

Zoraida Boluarte invited us to her place, and from there we went to the famous 3-D cinema. It doesn't seem all that revolutionary to me and the films are just the same. The real fun came later, when we found ourselves with two cops who turned the place upside down and carted us down to the police station. After a few hours there, we were released and told to come back the next day—today. We'll see.

The police stuff came to nothing: After a mild interrogation and a few apologies, they let us go. The next day they called us back in with some questions about a couple who had kidnapped a boy. They bore some resemblance to the Roy couple in La Paz.

The days succeed each other with nothing new and no opportunities. The only event of any import has been our change of residence, which enables us to live totally gratis.

The new house has worked out magnificently. We were invited to a party, and although I couldn't drink because of my asthma, Calica used the opportunity to get smashed once again.

Dr. Pesce honored us with one of his rambling, genial chats in which he touches with such assurance on so many diverse topics.

Our tickets for Tumbes are almost a sure thing—they're being arranged by a brother of Sra. de Peirano. So here we are, waiting, with practically nothing more to see in Lima.

Empty days continue to go by, and our own inertia ensures we remain in this city longer than we had hoped. Perhaps the ticket question will be resolved tomorrow, Monday, so we can set a definite departure date. The Pasos have made an appearance, saying they have good work prospects here.

We're almost on our way, with only a few minutes left to look over dreamy Lima again. Its churches are filled with an interior magnificence that doesn't extend to their exteriors—my opinion — they don't have the dignified sobriety of Cuzco's temples. The cathedral has several scenes of

the Passion of great artistic worth, which seem like they have been done by a painter from the Dutch school. But I don't like its nave, or its stylistically amorphous exterior, which looks as if it was built in the transition period when Spain's martial fury was on the wane and a decadent love of ease and luxury was rising. San Pedro has a number of valuable paintings, but I don't like its interior either.

We ran into Rojo, who had had the same trouble as us, only more so owing to the particular books he was carrying. He is traveling to Guayaquil, where we will meet up.

To farewell Lima we saw "The Big Concert," *a Russian film dangerously like US cinema, although better, considering its color and musical quality. Saying good-bye to the patients was really quite emotional, I think I will write about it.*

Lima, September 3 [1953]

Dear Tita,[10]

Sadly, I have to write to you in my beautiful handwriting, as I haven't been able to get hold of a typewriter to remedy the situation. At any rate, I hope you have a day free to dedicate to reading this letter.

Let's get to the point. Thank your friend Ferreira for the letter of introduction to the Bolivian college. Dr. Molina was very kind to me and seemed enchanted with both me and my traveling companion, the one you met at home. He subsequently offered me a job as a doctor and Calica work as a nurse in a mine; we accepted, but wanted to reduce the three months he wanted us to stay to one. Everything was settled and amicable and we were to report the next day to finalize details. Imagine our surprise when the next day we found out Dr. Molina had left to inspect the mines and wouldn't be back for two or three days. So we presented ourselves then, and still no Molina, although they believed he would be back in another couple of days. It would take too long to recount the times we went looking for him; the fact is that 20 days passed before he returned, and by then we could no longer agree to a month—the lost time would have made it two—so he gave us some introductory letters for the director of a tungsten mine, where we went for two or three days. Very interesting, especially because the mine is in a magnificent location. Overall the trip was worthwhile.

I should tell you that in La Paz I ignored my diet and all that nonsense, and nevertheless felt wonderful for the month and a half I spent there. We traveled quite a bit into the surrounding area— to Las Yungas, for example, very pretty tropical valleys—but one of the most interesting things we did was to study the intriguing political scene. Bolivia has been a particularly important example for the American continent. We saw exactly where the struggles had taken place, the holes left by bullets and even the remains of a man killed in the revolution and recently discovered in the cornice of a building—the lower part of his body had been blown away by one of those dynamite belts they wear around their waists. In the end, they fought without holding back. The revolutions here are not like those in Buenos Aires—two or three thousand (no one knows for sure how many) were left dead on the battlefield.

Even now the fighting continues, and almost every night people are wounded by gunfire on one side or the other. But the government is supported by an armed people, and there is no possibility of liquidating an armed movement from outside. It can, however, succumb to internal conflicts.

The MNR [Nationalist Revolutionary Movement] is a coalition with three more or less clear tendencies: the right, represented by Siles Suazo, vice-president and hero of the revolution; the center, represented by Paz Estenssoro, shiftier and probably as right-wing as the first; and the left, represented by Lechín, the visible head of a serious protest movement, but who himself is an unknown given to partying and chasing women. Power is likely to remain in the hands of Lechín's group, which counts on the powerful support of the armed miners, but resistance from their colleagues in government may prove serious, particularly as the army is going to be reorganized.

Well, I've told you something about the Bolivian situation. I'll tell you about Peru later, when I've lived here for a little longer, but in general I think that Yankee domination in Peru has not even created the fiction of economic well-being that can be seen in Venezuela, for example.

Of my future life, I know little about where I am headed and even less when. We have been thinking of going to Quito and from there to Bogotá and Caracas, but of the intermediary steps we haven't got much of an idea. I've only recently arrived here in Lima from Cuzco.

I won't tire of urging you to visit there if possible, especially Machu-Picchu. I promise you won't regret it.

I guess that since I left you must have taken at least five subjects, and I imagine you still go fishing for worms in the muck heap. There's little or nothing to write you about vocations, but if one day you change your tune and want to see the world,

remember this friend
who would risk his skin
to help you however he can
when the occasion arises
A hug. Until it occurs to you, and we're in the same place when it does,

Ernesto

The first leg of the journey got us to Piura without a break, where we arrived at lunchtime. Sick with asthma, I locked myself in my room, and only went out for a while in the evening to see a bit of the town, which is like a typical Argentine provincial city, but with more new cars.

Convincing the driver that we should pay less, the next day we took the bus to Tumbes and got there as night was falling. Among other towns, the journey took us through Talara, a rather picturesque oil port.

I didn't get to see Tumbes either because of asthma, and we continued our journey to the border at Aguas Verdes, crossing over to Huaquillas,[11] but not without suffering at the hands of the gangs who organize transport from one side of the bridge to the other. A lost day in terms of travel, which Calica used to scrounge a few beers.

The next day we set out for Santa Marta, where a boat took us on the river as far as Puerto Bolívar, and after an all-night crossing we arrived the next morning in Guayaquil, me, still with asthma.

There we met "Fatty" Rojo, no longer alone but with three friends from law school, who took us to their boarding house.[12]

We were six in total and with our last rounds of mate we formed a tight student circle. The consul was unreceptive when we tried to hit him for some mate leaves.

Ecuador

Guayaquil, like all these ports, is an excuse for a city that barely has its own life. It revolves around the daily succession of ships arriving and departing.

I wasn't able to see much, because the guys leaving for Guatemala told travelers' tales that were far too absorbing; one of them included Fatty Rojo. Later, I met a young guy, Maldonado,[13] who introduced me to some medical people, including Dr. Safadi,[14] a psychiatrist and a "bolshie" [Bolshevik] like his friend Maldonado. They put me in touch with another leprosy specialist.

They have a closed colony with 13 people in fairly bad condition, for whom there is little specific treatment.

At least the hospitals are clean and not all that bad.

My favorite way to pass the time is playing chess with people at the boarding house. My asthma is a bit better. We're thinking of staying for a couple more days, and trying to track down Velasco Ibarra.[15]

Plans made and unmade, financial worries and Guayaquilian phobias, all the result of a passing joke García made saying, "Hey, guys, why don't you come with us to Guatemala?"[16] The idea had already been in my head, waiting only for this prompt. Calica followed. These are now days of a feverish search. We've almost certainly been granted the visas, but for an estimated $200. The shortfall of $120.80 will be hard to find but we hope to do it with some luck and by trying to sell our stuff. The trip to Panama will be free, apart from $2 each a day, making it $32 for the four of us. This is all we have talked about, although, we can always cancel. Some hard times await us in Panama.

The interview with Velasco Ibarra was a miserable failure. The master of ceremonies, a Sr. Anderson, answered our pathetic pleas for help by commenting on the ups and downs of life, suggesting that we are currently experiencing a low, but that a high will come, etc.

On Sunday I discovered some coastal areas similar to river floodplains, but it was the company of Dr. Fortunato Safadi and his friend, an insurance salesman, who made the trip really interesting. Later in the day, he said that hard times await us in Panama, but the question is whether Panama itself awaits us…

After collecting the Guatemalan visa without any trouble, we went—still without the Panamanian visa—to buy boat tickets. An argument ensued because the company representative flatly refused to sell us tickets without first wiring the Colón Panamá Company. The answer came back the following evening and was a firm negative. That was Saturday. The Guayos, a small boat due to leave on Sunday, has postponed its departure until Wednesday.

Calica got a lift to Quito in a private truck.

We tried again on Monday, this time with a $35 money transfer in my and García's names, because we were determined to leave first. It didn't work, and with that behind us and only one miserable bullet left to fire we sent Calica a telegram telling him to wait for us. That evening I met Enrique Arbuiza, the insurance salesman, who told us he might be able to organize things, and the following morning, today, we met the head of a tourism business. He also refused, but gave us new hope, saying that the company taking us to Panama could issue us with a ticket. The insurance salesman, also a friend of the Guayos captain, took me along to see him and present him with our problem. The captain nearly exploded, but calmed down after we had a chance to explain things a little; we agreed to wait for the final answer this afternoon.

At any rate, we sent another telegram to Quito, revising the first, so that Calica could continue alone, at least to Bogotá. Our plan is to wait for the final answer, and then either for two of us to go to Panama, or for the three of us to clear out as soon as possible.

We will see…

We've seen nothing: over an hour of futile waiting for the captain of the Guayos to show up. We'll decide once and for all what to do tomorrow, but either way Andro Herrero is staying. He thinks one of us should stay behind as a contact point in Guayaquil, and that at any rate it's easier for two to slip through than three. Although that's true, we sense a hidden motive in all this and think that some love affair must be keeping him here; he's so mysterious, no one knows what he's up to.

I spent a terrible day prostrate with asthma, and with nausea and diarrhea from a saline purgative. García did nothing all day, so the uncertainty continues.

We're fixated on the visa for Panama. But with everything ready, they hit us for an extra 90 sucres, which none of us had, so it was put off until the afternoon. Nevertheless, I met the consul, who invited me to visit an Argentine ship. They treated us well enough and gave us mate, but the consul made me count out the 10 sucres for the boat religiously. It's a barge like the Ana G., which holds so many memories for me.17 I want to point out the following fact: the soldiers guarding the enrolment offices have the initials "US" on their backs.

We now have the visa, with its wonderful words: "Fare paid Panama to Guatemala." There's going to be a tremendous row. Today I ate with García on board the Argentine ship, and we were treated like kings. They gave us American cigarettes and we drank wine, not to mention the stew. The rest of the day, zero.

Two more days. A sad Saturday of upsetting farewells, a sad Sunday of further postponement. On Saturday I had the typewriter all but sold, until the residue of my bourgeois desire for property stopped me at the last moment. Now it's apparently too late, although I'll find out today. On Sunday evening, the ring was also pretty much a sure sale.

In the morning, when all our plans seemed to be in ruins, without a cent or any way of finding one, news of the postponement seemed like a gift from heaven. But when the engineer was asked for a date and replied, dubiously, "Who knows, it could be Thursday," our enthusiasm hit the floor. Five more days mean another 120 sucres, more difficulty paying for things, etc.

And now more and more days, and the machine couldn't be sold, and there's virtually nothing left to burn. Our situation is precarious, to say the least—not a single peso left, debts of 500 and potentially 1,000—but when? That is the question. We'll be leaving now on Sunday, if there's not another delay for some unforeseen reason.

Guayaquil [October 21, 1953]

[To his mother]

I am writing you this letter (who knows when you'll read it) about my new position as a 100 percent adventurer. A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since the news in my last epistle.

The gist is: As Calica García (one of our acquisitions) and I were traveling along for a while, we felt homesick for our beloved homeland. We talked about how good it was for the two members of the group who had managed to leave for Panama, and commented on the fantastic interview with X.X., that guardian angel you gave me, which I'll tell you about later. The thing is, García—almost in passing— invited us to go to Guatemala, and I was disposed to accept. Calica promised to give his answer the next day, and it was affirmative, so there were four new candidates for Yankee opprobrium.

But then our trials and tribulations in the consulates began, with our daily pleas for the Panamanian visas we required and, after several psychological ups and downs, he seemed to decide not to go. Your suit—your masterpiece, the pearl of your dreams—died heroically in a pawnshop, as did all the other unnecessary things in my luggage, which has been greatly reduced for the good of the trio's[18] economic stability—now achieved (whew!).

What this means is that if a captain, who is a sort of friend, agrees to use an old trick, García and I can travel to Panama, and then the combined efforts of those who want to reach Guatemala, plus those from there, will drag along the straggler left behind as security for the remaining debts. If the captain I mentioned messes it up, the same two partners in crime will go on to Colombia, again leaving the security here, and will head for Guatemala in whatever Almighty God unwarily places within their reach. […]

Guayaquil, [October]24

After a lot of coming and going and many calls, plus a discreet bribe, we have the visa for Panama. We'll leave tomorrow, Sunday, and will get there by the 29th or 30th. I have written this quick note at the consulate.

Ernesto

At sea, now, reviewing these last few days. The desperate search for someone to offer us something for the gear we wanted to sell; the evasive buyer of the ring, who finally caved in; our friend Monasterio's ultimate gesture in giving us 500 sucres and speaking with the landlady of the boarding house. The always cold, never satisfactory moments of farewell, when you find yourself unable to express your deep feelings.

We're in a first-class cabin, which for those travelers who have to pay would be terrible, but for us, it's perfect. For roommates we have a talkative Paraguayan, who is doing a lightning trip around the Americas by air, and a nice guy from Ecuador—both pretty hopeless. García is seasick, but after throwing up and taking some Benadril is dead to the world. For the evening there's a mate session with the engineer.

I've learned of the death of an aunt of mine in Buenos Aires, through a diplomat I met in Chile and whom I bumped into unexpectedly on the Argentine ship. He gave me the news almost as a passing comment.

Marta is not worth seeing, or so it's said, so we didn't disembark at the port. But the following day at Esmeraldas we let loose and spent a dollar visiting the whole town, in celebration of leaving Ecuador.

One of our compañeros, the Ecuadorean, came across a cousin he had never met before—they became firm friends, and took us on a stroll through a tropical forest on the outskirts of town.

After this, we've had a whole day at sea, which I've found to be quite beautiful, although Gualo García hasn't enjoyed it at all. On leaving Esmeraldas, a tramp was discovered—a stowaway—who was returned to port. It brought back fond memories of other times.

Panama

Now we are settled in Panama without a clear direction,[19] in fact with nothing clear at all except the certainty of leaving. Incredible things have happened. In order: we arrived, and without any trouble, the customs inspector calmly checked through our things, another employee stamped and returned our passports, and from Balboa, the port where we disembarked, we set off for Panama City.

Fatty Rojo had left the address of a boarding house, so we went there and were put up in a corridor for a dollar a day each.

Nothing out of the ordinary that day, but on the next we received a big surprise. Opening our letters at the Argentine consulate, we found one from Rojo and Valdovinos, announcing the marriage of the latter. We were most intrigued, until the girl, Luzmila Oller,[20] arrived and told us all about the wedding and other things. The event had sparked a revolution in her family. The father has done a bunk and the mother refuses to see him, so the guy just gets up and continues on his trip to Guatemala, without a good screw or even, it seems, a serious attempt at passion.

The girl is very nice and seems quite intelligent, but she's too Catholic for my taste.

Perhaps the Argentine consul will arrange something for us or perhaps we'll write for a magazine called Siete. Maybe I'll give a lecture. So maybe we'll be able to eat tomorrow.

Nothing new, except that tomorrow I am to give a lecture on allergies, saying something about the organization of the medical faculty in Buenos Aires. The students gave me a warm welcome at the college. I met Don Santiago Pi Suñer, the physiologist, and in another context we met Dr. Carlos Guevara Moreno, who struck me as an intelligent demagogue, knowledgeable in mass psychology but not in the dialectics of history. He is very nice and friendly and treated us with deference. He gives the impression that he knows what he's doing and where he's going, but that he wouldn't take a revolution beyond what is strictly indispensable to keep the masses content. He admires Perón. We might be able to publish two articles, one in Siete, the other in the Sunday supplement of Panamá-América.

Luzmila has received a letter from Óscar Valdovinos, 16 pages long. She exudes happiness.

I gave the famous lecture to an audience of 12, including Dr. Santiago Pi Suñer, for $25. I wrote an account of the Amazon, $20, and one about Machu-Picchu, probably $25.

We're going to move to a place that's rent free. We met a young painter, not a bad guy. The guys are about to be expelled from the FUA for having visited consulates and traveled in a foundation airplane from Guayaquil to Quito. They've got Valdovinos by the balls in Guatemala because he sent a declaration in the name of "some anti-Peronist young Argentines." I don't know how it will all be sorted out. We went for a very pleasant walk along the beach at Riomar with Mariano Oteiza, president of the Panamanian Students Federation.[21]

My article about the Amazon has appeared in Panamá-América; the other is still fighting for a place.[22] Our situation is bad. We don't know whether we'll be able to leave, or how. The Costa Rican consul is an idiot and won't give us a visa. We met a sculptor, Manuel Teijeiro, an interesting man.

The struggle is getting heavy. Met the painter Sinclair, who studied in Argentina. A good guy.

The best so far is the trio of Adolfo Benedetti, Rómulo Escobar and Isaías García. All great guys.[23]

We still haven't checked out the canal properly. We went there the other day but were too late and it was closed.

I have to add another two names: Everaldo Tómlinson and Rubén Darío Moncada Luna.

The last days in Panama were a waste of time. The Costa Rican consul wouldn't give us the visas until we showed him not just tickets out of the country but also tickets in. We had to ask Luzmila to lend us the money. We couldn't get the camera out, or get the PAA [Panamanian Airlines] to refund the fares to Costa Rica. We missed a farewell party they gave for Luzmila, or rather, I missed it, because Gualo had a complex about the way they regarded us and didn't want to go. Luzmila was a little cold in the end.

For the second piece they gave me $15, thanks to the effort another decent guy put in, José María Sánchez.

We left Panama with $5 in our pockets, meeting at the last moment an interesting character from Córdoba. Ricardo Luti is a botanist and asthmatic who has been in the Amazon region and Antarctica and is thinking about doing a trip through the center of Latin America via Paraguay, the Amazon and the Orinoco—my old idea.

We're now in the center of Panama. The suspension on the truck has gone completely, with no sign of the truck driver, who went to David for spare parts and hasn't returned. We ate a little rice and an egg for breakfast. At night the mosquitoes won't let you sleep, by day the mosquitoes won't let you live (poetic). The region is relatively elevated, not at all hot, with abundant forests and heavy downpours of rain.

I made a lightning visit to Palo Seco, where an American Jewish couple has been living for 20 years. They don't seem particularly informed, but they devote themselves exclusively to the sick.

Rubén Darío Moncada only got it half right. The driver turned out to be worse than a motherfucker and on a bend when the brakes failed, we went flying. I was on top of the truck, and when I saw the disaster coming, I threw myself as far away as possible, then rolled a little further,

until I came to rest with my head in my hands. When the hubbub had passed, I got up to help the others, realizing that no one but me had a scratch on them—I escaped with a grazed elbow, torn pants and a very painful right heel.

I slept the night in the truck driver Rogelio's house. Gualo stayed on the road looking after our things.

The next day we missed the 2 p.m. train and resigned ourselves to one leaving at 7 the next morning. Arriving at Progreso, we then had to hoof it to the Costa Rican coast,[24] where we were received very well. I played football despite my bad foot.

We left early the next morning, and after losing our way we found the right road and walked for two hours through mud. We made it to the railway terminal, where we got talking with an inspector who, incidentally, had wanted to go to Argentina but hadn't been given leave. We reached the port and pressured the captain for the fare. He conceded, but not on the question of accommodation. Two employees took pity on us, so here we are installed in their rooms, sleeping on the floor and feeling very content.

The famous "Pachuca," which transports pachucos (bums), is leaving port tomorrow, Sunday. We now have beds. The hospital is comfortable and you can get proper medical attention, but its comforts vary depending on your position in the Company.[25] As always, the class spirit of the gringos is clearly evident.

Golfito is a real gulf, deep enough for ships of 26 feet to enter easily. It has a little wharf and enough housing to accommodate the 10,000 company employees. The heat is intense, but the place is very pretty. Hills rise to 100 meters almost out of the sea, their slopes covered with tropical vegetation that surrenders only to the constant presence of human activity. The town is divided into clearly defined zones, with guards to prevent unwanted movement. Of course, the gringos live in the nicest area, a little like Miami. The poor are kept separate, shut away behind the four walls of their own homes and restrictive class lines.

Food is the responsibility of a decent guy who is now also a good friend: Alfredo Fallas.

Medina is my roommate, also a decent guy. There's a Costa Rican medical student, the son of a doctor, as well as a Nicaraguan teacher and journalist in voluntary exile from Somoza.

The "Pachuca" left Golfito at 1 p.m. with us on board. We were well stocked with food for the two-day voyage. The sea became a little rough in the afternoon and the Río Grande (the ship's real name) started to be tossed about. Nearly all the passengers, including Gualo, started vomiting. I stayed outside with a black woman, Socorro, who had picked me up and was as horny as a toad, having spent 16 years on her back.

Quepos is another banana port, now pretty much abandoned by the company, which replaced the banana plantations with cocoa and palm-oil trees that gave less of a return. It has a very pretty beach.

Costa Rica

I spent the whole day between the dodges and smirks of the black woman, arriving in Puntarenas at 6 in the evening. We had to wait a good while there, because six prisoners had escaped and couldn't be found. We visited an address Alfredo Fallas had given us, with a letter from him for a Sr. Juan Calderón Gómez.

The guy worked a thousand miracles and gave us 21 colones. Arriving in San José we remembered the scornful words of a joker back in Buenos Aires: "Central America is all estates: you've got the Costa Rican estate, the Tacho Somoza estate, etc."

A letter from Alberto, evoking images of luxury trips, has made me want to see him again. According to his plan, he'll go to the United States in March. Calica is destitute in Caracas.

We're firing blanks into the air here. They give us mate at the embassy. Our supposed friends don't seem to be good for anything. One is a radio director and presenter, a hopeless character. Tomorrow we'll try to get an interview with Ulate.

A day half wasted. Ulate was very busy and couldn't see us. Rómulo Betancourt has gone to the countryside. The day after next we'll appear in El Diario de Costa Rica with photos and everything, plus a big string of lies.[26] We haven't met anyone important, but we did meet a Puerto Rican, a former suitor of Luzmila Oller, who introduced us to some other people. Tomorrow I might get to visit the Costa Rican leprosy hospital.

I didn't see the leprosarium, but I did meet two excellent people: Dr. Arturo Romero, a tremendously cultured man who due to various intrigues has been removed from the leprosarium board; and Dr. Alfonso Trejos, a researcher and a very fine person.

I visited the hospital, and just this morning, the leprosarium. We have a great day ahead. A chat with a Dominican short-story writer and revolutionary, Juan Bosch, and with the Costa Rican communist leader Manuel Mora Valverde.

The meeting with Juan Bosch was very interesting. He's a literary person with clear ideas and leftist tendencies. We didn't talk literature, just politics. He characterized Batista as a thug among thugs. He is a personal friend of Rómulo Betancourt and defended him warmly, as he did Prío Socarrás and Pepe Figueres.[27] *He says Perón has no popular influence in Latin America, and that in 1945 he wrote an article denouncing him as the most dangerous demagogue in the Americas. The discussion continued on very friendly terms.*

In the afternoon we met Manuel Mora Valverde, who is a gentle man, slow and deliberate, but he has a number of tic-like gestures suggesting a great internal unease, a dynamism held in check by method. He gave us a thorough account of recent Costa Rican politics:

> *"Calderón Guardia is a rich man who came to power with the support of the United Fruit Company and through the influence of local landowners. He ruled for two years until World War II, when Costa Rica sided with the Allies. The State Department's first measure was that land owned by local Germans should be confiscated, particularly land where coffee was cultivated. This was done, and the land was subsequently sold, in obscure deals involving some of Calderón Guardia's ministers. This lost him the support of all the country's landowners, except United Fruit. The Company employees are anti-Yankee, in response to its exploitation.*
>
> *"As it was, Calderón Guardia was left with no support whatsoever, to the point where he could not leave his house for the abuse he was subjected to on the streets. At that point the Communist Party offered him its support, on the condition he adopt some basic labor legislation and reshuffle his cabinet. In the meantime, Otilio Ulate, then a man of the left and personal friend of Mora, warned the latter of a plan Calderón Guardia had devised to trap him. Mora went ahead with the alliance, and the popularity of Calderón's government soared as the first gains began to be felt by the working class.*
>
> *"Then the problem of succession was posed as Calderón's term was coming to an end. The communists, in favor of a united front of national reconciliation to pursue the government's working-class policies, proposed Ulate. The rival candidate, León Cortés, was totally opposed to the idea and continued to stand. At this time, using his paper El Diario de Costa Rica, Ulate began a vigorous campaign against the labor legislation, causing a split in the left and Don Otilio's about-face.*
>
> *"The elections saw the victory of Teodoro Picado, a feeble intellectual ruined by whisky, although relatively left leaning, who formed a government with communist support. These tendencies persisted during his entire period of office, although the chief of police was a Cuban colonel, an FBI agent imposed by the United States.*
>
> *"In the final stages, the disgruntled capitalists organized a huge strike of the banking and industry sectors, which the government did not know how to break. Students who took to the streets were fired on and some were wounded. Teodoro Picado panicked. Elections were approaching and there were two candidates: Calderón Guardia again, and Otilio Ulate. Teodoro Picado, opposing the communists, handed over the electoral machine to Ulate, keeping the police for himself. The elections were fraudulent; Ulate was triumphant. An appeal to nullify the result was lodged with the electoral commission, with the opposition also requesting a ruling on the alleged violations, stating it would abide by the verdict. The court refused to hear the appeal (with one of the three judges dissenting), so an application was made to the Chamber of Deputies and the election result was set aside. A giant lawsuit was then launched, with the people by now roused to fever pitch. But here a parenthesis is needed.*
>
> *"In Guatemala, Arévalo's presidency had led to the formation of what came to be known as the Socialist Republics of the Caribbean. The Guatemalan president was supported in this by Prío Socarrás, Rómulo Betancourt, Juan Rodríguez, a Dominican millionaire, Chamorro and others. The original revolutionary plan was to land in Nicaragua and remove Somoza from power, since El Salvador and Honduras would fall without much of a fight. But Argüello, a friend of Figueres, raised the question of Costa Rica and its convulsive internal situation, so Figueres flew to Guatemala. The alliance came into operation; Figueres led a revolt in Cartago and with arms swiftly took over the aerodrome there, in case any air support was necessary.*
>
> *"Resistance was organized rapidly, however, and the people attacked the barracks to obtain weapons, which the government was refusing to give them. The revolution had no popular support—Ulate had not participated—and was doomed to failure. But it was the*

popular forces headed by the communists who had won—a conclusion extremely disconcerting for the bourgeoisie, and with them, Teodoro Picado. Picado flew to Nicaragua to confer with Somoza and obtain weapons, only to find that a top US official would also be at the meeting, and who demanded, as the price for assistance, that Picado should eradicate communism in Costa Rica (thereby guaranteeing the fall of Manuel Mora), and that each weapon supplied would come with a man attached to it—signifying an invasion of Costa Rica.

"Picado did not accept this at that time, as it would have meant betraying the communists who had supported him throughout the struggle. But the revolution was in its death throes and the power of the communists so frightened the reactionary elements in the government that they boycotted the defense of the country until the invaders were at the gates of San José and then abandoned the capital for Liberia, close to Nicaragua. At the same time, the rest of the army went over to the Nicaraguans, taking all the available ammunition. A pact was made with Figueres, underwritten by the Mexican embassy, and the popular forces actually laid down their weapons in front of that embassy. Figueres did not keep his side of the deal, however, and the Mexican embassy was unable to enforce it because of the hostility of the US State Department. Mora was deported. It was pure luck he escaped with his life as the plane he was traveling in came under machine-gun fire. The plane landed in the US Canal Zone, where the Yankee police arrested him and handed him over to the Panamanian chief of police, at that time Colonel Remón. The Yankee journalists wanting to question him were expelled, and then he had an altercation with Remón and was locked up. Finally he went to Cuba, from where Grau San Martín expelled him to Mexico. He was able to return to Costa Rica during the Ulate period.

"Figueres was faced with the problem that his forces consisted of only 100 Puerto Ricans and the 600 or so men who formed the Caribbean Legion. Although he initially told Mora that his program was designed for a 12-year period and that he had no intention of surrendering power to the corrupt bourgeoisie represented by Ulate, he had to make a deal with the bourgeoisie and agreed to give up power after only a year and a half, an undertaking he fulfilled after he had fixed the election machinery to his benefit and organized a cruel repression. When the time was up, Ulate returned to power and kept it for the appointed four years. It was not a feature of his government to uphold the established freedoms or to respect the progressive legislation achieved under the previous governments. But it did repeal the anti-landowner "law on parasites."

"The fraudulent elections gave Figueres victory over the candidate representing the Calderón tradition, who now lives as a closely monitored exile in Mexico. In Mora's view, Figueres has a number of good ideas, but because they lack any scientific basis he keeps going astray. He divides the United States into two: the State Department (very just) and the capitalist trusts (the dangerous octopuses). What will happen when Figueres sees the light and stops having any illusion about the goodness of the United States? Will he fight or give up? That is the dilemma. We shall see!"

A day that left no trace: boredom, reading, weak jokes. Roy, a little old pensioner from Panama, came in for me to look at him because he thought he was going to die from a tapeworm. He has chronic salteritis.

The meeting with Rómulo Betancourt did not have that history-lesson quality of the one with Mora. My impression is that he's a politician with some firm social ideas in his head, but otherwise he sways toward whatever is to his best advantage. In principle, he is solidly with the United States. He spoke lies about the Río Pact and spent most of the time raging about the communists.

We said our good-byes to everyone, especially León Bosch, a really first-rate guy, then took a bus to Alajuela and started hitching. After several adventures we arrived this evening in Liberia, the capital of Guanacaste province, which is an infamous and windy town like those of our own little province, Santiago del Estero.

A jeep took us as far as the road permitted, and from there we started our long walk under quite a strong sun. After more than 10 kilometers, we encountered another jeep, which took us as far as the little town of La Cruz, where we were invited to have lunch. At 2:00 we set off for another 22 kilometers, but by 5 or 6 p.m. night was falling and one of my feet was a misery to walk on. We slept in a bin used for storing rice and fought all night over the blanket.

The next day, after walking until 3 in the afternoon, making a dozen or so detours around a river, we finally reached Peñas Blancas. We had to stay there as no more cars were heading to the neighboring town of Rivas.[28]

The next day dawned to rain and by 10 a.m. there was still no sign of a truck, so we decided to brave the drizzle and set off for Rivas anyway. At that moment, Fatty Rojo appeared in a car with Boston University license plates. They were trying to get to Costa Rica, an impossible feat because the muddy track on which we ourselves had been bogged a few times was actually the Panama-Costa Rica highway. Rojo was accompanied by the brothers Domingo and Walter Beberaggi Allende. We went on to Rivas and there, close to the town, we ordered a spit roast with mate and cañita, a kind of Nicaraguan gin. A little corner of Argentina transplanted to the "Tacho estate." They continued on to San Juan del Sur, intending to take the car across to Puntarenas, while we took the bus to Managua.

Nicaragua

We arrived at night, and began the rounds of boarding houses and hotels to find the cheapest accommodation. In the end we settled on one where for four córdobas we each had a tiny room without electricity.

We started out the next day tramping round the consulates and encountering the usual idiocies. At the Honduran consulate Rojo and his friends appeared; they'd been unable to get across and were now rethinking the plan because of the outrageous price being charged. Things were then decided very quickly. The two of us would go with Domingo, the younger Beberaggi, to sell the car in Guatemala, while Fatty and Walter would travel by plane to San José in Costa Rica.

That evening we had a long session, each of us giving their perspective on the question of Argentina. Rojo, Gualo and Domingo were intransigent radicals; Walter was pro-Labor; and myself, a sniper, according to Fatty Rojo at least. Most interesting for me was the idea Walter gave me of the Labor Party and Cipriano Reyes— very different from the one I had already. He described Cipriano's origins as a union leader, the prestige he slowly won among the Berisa meat-packers and his attitude toward the Unión Democrática coalition, when he supported the Labor Party (founded by Perón at that time) in the knowledge of what it was doing.

After the elections, Perón ordered the unification of the party, causing its dissolution. A violent debate ensued in the parliament, in which the Labor supporters, headed by Cipriano Reyes, didn't bend. Finally talks got underway for a revolutionary coup d'état, headed by the military under Brigadier de la Colina and his assistant, Veles, who betrayed him by telling Perón what was happening.

The three main leaders of the party—Reyes, Beberaggi and García Velloso—were imprisoned and tortured, the first barbarically. After a time, the judge, Palma Beltrán, ordered the prisoners' conditional release into police custody, while the state prosecutor appealed against the sentence. Beberaggi managed to escape when the parliament was in session and made his way secretly to Uruguay; all the others were arrested and are still in prison. Walter went to the United States and graduated as an economics professor. In a series of radio talks he denounced the Perón regime in no uncertain terms, and was stripped of his Argentine citizenship.

In the morning we left for the north, having left the others on the plane, and reached the border as it was closing.

We only had $20. We had to pay on the Honduran side. We crossed the whole narrow strip that is Honduras at that point and made it to the other border, but couldn't pay because it turned out to be too expensive. We slept in the open air—the others, on rubber mattresses, me, in a sleeping bag.

We were the first to cross the border and continued north. It was very slow going because the number of punctures we'd had left us with some rotten spare tires. We reached San Salvador and set about wrangling free visas—which proved possible with the help of the Argentine embassy.

We continued on to the [Guatemalan] border,29 where we paid the surcharge with a few pounds of coffee. On the other side it cost us a torch, but we were on our way, albeit with only $3 in our pockets. Domingo was tired, so we stopped to sleep in the car.

Guatemala

After a few minor incidents, we made it in time for breakfast at Óscar and Luzmila's boarding house, only to find that they had somehow fallen out with the landlady. We had to find another boarding house where we wouldn't have to pay upfront. That evening, December 24, we went to celebrate at the house of Juan Rothe, an agronomist married to an Argentine girl, who greeted us like old friends. I slept a lot, drank too much and fell sick immediately.

For the next few days I had a terrible asthma attack, so I was immobile because of my asthma and also the festivities. By December 31 I was well again, but was careful what I ate during the celebrations.

I've met no interesting people worth mentioning. One evening I had a long session with [Ricardo] Temoche, a former APRA[30] deputy. According to him, APRA's principal enemy is the Communist Party—for him neither imperialism nor the oligarchy has any significance; the Bolsheviks are the irreconcilable enemy. At the same party was a noted economist, Carlos D'Ascolli, but he was too drunk to speak to me. After my attack, and at the end of the festivities, we witnessed the end of what had seemed to be a serious romance between Domingo Beberaggi and a girl called Julia. On Sunday he sold the car and flew to Costa Rica.

Juan Rothe is going to Honduras as a technician, so he threw a farewell barbecue. It was formidable in every sense. The only person not drunk was me because of my diet. I visited Peñalver,[31] a supporter of Acción Democrática and a specialist in malaria, who has got a few things moving for me. Now I am close to the minister, but he doesn't have much weight.

Another contact I've made is a strange gringo[32] who writes bits and pieces about Marxism and has it translated into Spanish. The intermediary is Hilda Gadea,[33] while Luzmila and I put in the hard yards. So far we've made $25. I'm giving the gringo Spanish lessons.

Another find has been the Valerini couple. She is very pretty; he's very drunk, but a decent guy. They agreed to introduce us to an éminence grise within the government: Mario Sosa Navarro. We'll see what comes of it.

The days pass with no resolution. In the afternoons I work with Peñalver for a while, but he pays me nothing. In the mornings I go out to sell paintings of my Black Christ of Esquipulas, who is adored by people here, but that also earns me nothing as no sales are made. Among the interesting people I've met is Alfonso Bawer Pais,[34] a lawyer and president of the Banco Agrario, a man with good intentions. Edelberto Torres is a young communist student and son of Professor Torres[35] who wrote a biography of Rubén Darío. He seems like a decent guy. No news from the éminence grise. I had an intense political discussion with Fatty Rojo and Gualo, in the home of an engineer named Méndez.[36]

Nothing new in terms of finding work. The administrative efforts at the Ministry of Public Health have failed. For now the only game in town appears to be a radio contract; although nothing's come of it yet, it looks promising. We've met no one interesting these last few days. I put on the ACTH from 8 a.m. until 2 or so in the afternoon. I'm fine.

No prospects in the near future. The éminence grise did not keep the appointment we made with him.

A Saturday without trouble or glory. The only good thing was a serious chat with Sra. Helena de Holst,[37] who is close to the communists on many things and strikes me as a very good person. In the evening I had a chat with Mujica[38] and Hilda, and a certain little adventure with a plumpish schoolteacher. From now on, I'll try to keep a daily journal, and familiarize myself more with the political situation here in Guatemala.

A Sunday without novelty, until the evening when I was asked to attend to one of the Cubans who was complaining of severe abdominal pain.[39] I called an ambulance and we waited in the hospital until 2 a.m., when the doctor decided it was necessary to wait before operating. We left him under observation.

Earlier, at a party in Myrna Torres's home, I met a girl who was showing some interest in me and talked about the possibility of some work for 40 quetzals.[40] We'll see.

Another day without trouble or glory. There's a prospect of 10 quetzals (we'd get 25 commission) and accommodation. We'll see. The Cuban[41] was going to look into this in his department.

One more day without trouble or glory. A refrain that seems to be alarmingly repetitious. Gualo vanished all day, to do nothing, and I seized the chance to do nothing as well. In the evening I went to visit the college where I may get work. […]

No new developments. I spoke to the Bolivian ambassador, a good man and more than that in terms of his politics. In the evening we went to the opening of the second congress of the CGTG,[42] a confused affair apart from the speech of the FSM [World Federation of Trade Unions] delegate, a great speaker.

Another day gone… Evidence has now been published that the plot people were speaking about really did exist. We have the possibility of an order but it will be necessary to present a program like respectable people. I am a representative for leather and illuminated hoardings—no job. Lots of mate.

A new day without trouble or glory. There's nothing expected from [Jaime] Díaz Rozzoto.[43] I went out with a girl who seems promising. […] Anita [Torriello] asked us to pay for the boarding house and Hilda can't give us more than $10. We owe $60 or more. Tomorrow is Sunday, so we

should not despair.

Two more days with no change to our routine. I have asthma again, but it seems I'll be able to beat it. Gualo is off to Mexico with Fatty Rojo to stay for a month. I have a letter for the director of the IGSS,[44] Alfonso Solórzano, we'll see what happens. If nothing crystallizes, one of these days I'll pack my bags and emigrate to Mexico as well. I have written a grandiloquent article titled, "The Dilemma of Guatemala,"[45] not for publication, just for my own pleasure […].

The asthma is getting worse all the time. I have started drinking mate and stopped eating corncakes, but it keeps getting worse. Tomorrow I think I'll pull out a tooth and see if that isn't the root of the problem. I'll also see if I can finally solve the currency problem.

More days to add to my diary notes. Days full of inner life and nothing else. A collection of all kinds of disasters and the never changing spiral of hopes. There is no doubt about it, I'm an optimistic fatalist […].

I've had asthma these days, the last few confined to my room hardly going out at all, although yesterday (Sunday) we went with the Venezuelans and Nicanor Mujica to Amatitlán. There we got into a heavy argument, all of them against me, except for Fatty Rojo who said I don't have the moral ability to engage in a debate. Today I went to see about the possibility of work as a doctor: 80 a month, for one hour's work a day. In the IGSS they told me with utmost certainty that there are no positions. [Alfonso] Solórzano was friendly and to the point. Now the day can come to an end with the old full stop. We'll see.

But we've seen nothing. As I was in no state to move, I sent Gualo to take them my qualifications, but later Herbert Zeissig started asking for more information about me, whether or not I was affiliated with the party, etc. Hilda didn't speak to Sra. Helena de Holst but […] sent her a telegram. The asthma continues. Gualo is getting impatient to leave.

Two more days to add to this succession, and nothing new is expected. I didn't move because of the asthma, but I feel it's approaching a climax, with vomiting at night. Helenita de Holst has tried to get in touch with me, so in fact that's where I'm placing most of my hope. Hilda Gadea is still very worried about me, and is always coming by and bringing things. Julia Mejías found me a house in Amatitlán to stay for the weekend. Herbert Zeissig avoided having to make a final decision, sending me to see V.M. Gutiérrez[46] to obtain the support of the Communist Party, which seems doubtful to me.

One more day, although hope is renewed as my health begins to improve. Today will be decisive, and Gualo will definitely leave tomorrow at dawn; he's not sleeping here. Rojo paid half the bill at the boarding house. I owe 45 quetzals. I still don't know whether I'll be going to Amatitlán tomorrow; when Gualo arrives I'll know for sure either way.

I visited Sra. de Holst, who was very kind to me, but her promises, no doubt sincere, are dependent on the minister for public health — and he's already given me the cold shoulder. In the evening I visited Julia Valerini, who had lost a little boy and had had a shocking headache all day.

Two long days, with a strange chill, especially outside in the evenings, with shivering and so on. After a youth festival organized by Myrna,[47] where I'd gone with Hilda for a change, I beat it to the banks of a lake to sleep, and then the shivering started. The next day, Sunday, I bought some provisions at the market and walked very slowly to the other side of the lake. I had a wonderful siesta, then tried to drink some mate but the water was too bitter. At nightfall I made a fire for a barbecue, but the wood was no good, I was already freezing, and the barbecue was shit. I threw half of it in the lake to destroy any trace of the ignominy.

I was walking back slowly when I came across a drunk who made the trip seem shorter. A van picked us up and here I am.

Monday saw nothing worth mentioning, except for Peñalver's pronouncement that he's working on securing a medical position for me. Sra. de Holst doesn't know anyone well enough in the PAR [Partido Acción Revolucionario], the main party in that department, to ask them for something like that. We'll see.

A day of conscious desperation, due not to the cyclical crisis but the cold analysis of reality. My job as overseer at the Argentine's is the only sure thing. I've given up the idea of being a doctor for the trade unions; the job in a peasant community and the other one from Helenita de Holst are still up in the air. I met Pellecer[48]—in my view, neither fish nor fowl.

The rest continues on its daily course. I meet people on both the left and the right. If things continue like this, in no time I'll be working as a bill poster to pay my expenses and other things. We'll see.

I finally received a letter from home and know the answer on the mate—no, no, no. The day slipped by because I had no energy and took to my room for a nap. The boss Dícono didn't leave, only his wife, who gave me a mango that should have been thrown away.

Tomorrow I might go to the country for the job at the colony.

Several days have passed, two of them at La Viña colony. A spectacular place, in a landscape similar to the Sierras Grandes in Córdoba, and human material to be worked into shape. But they lack that essential ingredient: the desire to pay for a doctor of their own. My stay was wonderful, but on the way back I realized something had disagreed with my stomach, and I had to vomit. Then it calmed down a little. We spent the next day in Chimaltenango, the little town where the youth festival[49] was being held. The place was very pretty, and each of us did whatever took their fancy. Our little group was the same as always, with Hilda Gadea, the gringo and a Honduran woman…

Nothing happened on Monday of particular interest, just another day closer to the goal: May 1.

After confusion over the matter of introductions, I went to the farm with Peñalver, who rather demagogically proposed me for the job. The director asked me how much I wanted, and I kept it low at 100 quetzals for twice a week, on the condition they spend 25 a month on laboratory equipment. I have to go back on Saturday to see what the outcome is.

The whole farm business is very murky. Answer postponed. I went to Tiquisate and it didn't go well, but there's some hope of not such a good job, with board and lodging. That leaves the one through Sra. de Holst, and then the thing with the Argentine. Tomorrow, we'll see.

It's not tomorrow but the day after and, of course, we haven't heard a thing. Nor does it look like we'll hear anything any time soon. Having made up my mind completely, I tried to see Guerrero but wasn't able to find him. The only thing worth mentioning is a letter from Mamá in which she tells me Sara[50] has had an operation and is not good; they found cancer in her large intestine…

Today I'm in a great mood. It was Julia Mejías who introduced me to García Granados, who said he would give me a job to go to Petén for $125. I still need authorization from the union, which I'll try to get tomorrow. If it happens it'll be great […]. Tomorrow could be a day of further disappointment, or my big day in Guatemala. I am optimistic.

Now I'm not so optimistic—far from it. I spoke with Sibaja, but he paid me no attention. At 4 p.m. tomorrow he'll tell me once and for all whether he's been able to influence the head of the union. On another front, tomorrow Lily will speak to her brother. It will probably come to nothing again. We'll see. The Geografía work continues, although today I just wandered around, not doing a lot.

Two more days and today, yes, a little bit of hope. Yesterday, nothing.

Sibaja is good for nothing, but today I went on my own account to see the head of the union, a man looking to keep his job, an anticommunist, given to intrigue, but seemingly disposed to help me. I didn't sing quite the appropriate tune, but neither did I risk much. He'll give me a final answer on Wednesday.

Two more days to add to this concert of complaints, but with a couple of positive results. Yesterday was the visit to the former house of Lily's famous brother, ostentatious but with a good consulting room and some sort of a laboratory. The woman is Italian, and has sparked my desire to travel to Europe. They have something Indo-Americans are missing. I had a touch of asthma that started to get worse, but I swallowed a few of Ross's pills and it stopped. Today's positive was the arrival of a kilo of mate, as well as a letter from Alberto and Calica telling me of some cash that set me dreaming for a while. Hilda's book is progressing bit by bit, if rather slowly. Tomorrow I'll find out about going to Sanidad to study parasitic diseases.

Two more days in which nothing has happened apparently. However, the Petén trip does seem to have been resolved[…].

When I heard the Cubans making their grand speeches with total serenity, I felt pretty small. I can give a speech that is 10 times more objective and without the platitudes, I can do it better and can convince an audience of what I'm saying. The only problem is, I don't convince myself and the Cubans do. Ñico[51] left his soul in the microphone, firing even a skeptic like me with enthusiasm.

El Petén confronts me with the problem of my asthma, a challenge I accept. I shall have to succeed without means and I believe I can do it, but I also think that success will be more the result of my natural qualities—which are greater than my subconscious would believe—than the faith I have in achieving it.

Three days now and nothing new, except for an asthma attack that has confined me to "my quarters." It's Sunday and Hilda has gone to the port but I didn't feel up to it. There's nothing definite about the job, although I imagine the final result will be yes. I wish it would resolve itself one way or the other so I can work out what I'm actually doing. Financially, these months in the wilderness will serve only to leave me without debt, and with a camera. The future, in terms of the country, is unclear; I'll have to explain this to Alberto. It seems my asthma has subsided a bit.

If I haven't improved much tomorrow, I won't move […]. The question of work has not been resolved, except perhaps in principle. Within another couple of days there will be further communication, perhaps this time it will be final. We'll see…

Two more days in the sun; everything and nothing has happened. The job is still unresolved, although my impression is that it's mine. I spoke to the union boss, who said he would submit a list of questions to the contractor.

Two more days with nothing fully resolved. I'm now saying I'm going to El Petén, although I don't have the slightest assurance that this is the case. I'm at the point of making a list of what I will need […]. I am desperate to go. Perhaps by Monday everything will be settled. Tomorrow, Myrna leaves for an adventure in Canada.

Myrna has gone,[52] leaving behind a collection of broken hearts without knowing who she herself loves. But worse is that I don't know if I'm leaving. Always the same uncertainty […].

Bad news yet again. This is the story that never ends. The son of a bitch Andrade wouldn't even see me; this morning he made me ask myself a couple of times what I really wanted to do. I'm really up in the air and don't know what to do.

Two more days and nothing happening. My original decision to write immediately to Dr. Aguilar[53] never materialized. I'll only do it if they answer me today with "no" or another evasion. The lawyer García Granados was also cool. Only Julia answers me.

Of work, fuck all. I still have Dr. Aguilar's letter in my pocket. In a while I'll try to see the son of a bitch Andrade and get him to tell me something. I'm guessing it's no. I've got all my correspondence on hold because of this.

Enthusiasm depends on health and circumstances; both have been failing me. The Petén job seems more and more remote. The letter has already gone to Dr. Aguilar but, of course, I haven't received an answer. The whole thing is fucked. I don't know what the hell to do […]. I feel like pissing off—perhaps to Venezuela.

More days, if not ripe with results, then at least with promises. From Tiquisate, no news. From Buenos Aires, news of the death of my aunt Sara. From El Petén, I've stopped counting on it. From the boarding house, that I have to pay up. From the gringo, that he doesn't like the food at his new boarding house, and that if it doesn't improve we can swap places […]. From Sra. de Holst, that I should go and live with her. That's a précis of my recent life. I'm practicing at the Sanidad laboratory in case they call me to Tiquisate — otherwise I'm just waiting to see what happens. I've promised to pay the boarding house by Saturday for at least a month, which is just two days away, but I don't know where that cash will come from.

Several days have passed with a few new developments, not very important for the future, but giant news for today. Things turned ugly at the boarding house when I couldn't pay even five cents on Saturday. I left my watch and a gold chain as security[…]. After pawning my jewelry, I set off for Tiquisate and on the way came down with asthma—an omen of what it will be like if I do go there. Dr. Aguilar was again brief and to the point: there's a job as a laboratory technician, but not unless all my papers are in order. Now I'm caught up in that.

Sra. de Holst has invited me to stay at her house. I'll probably go, but I haven't yet given a definite answer […].

Tomorrow, I stop hanging out in the shit to surround myself with blood. My aunt, Sara de la Serna, died of an embolism arising from an operation to remove a malignant tumor from her large intestine. I didn't love her, but her death has had an impact on me. She was healthy, and very active, and a death like this seemed so unlikely. Nevertheless, it's a solution, since the disease would have meant she would have had a terrible life.

A day of utter immobility. Haya de la Torre passed through Guatemala […]. A letter arrived from Gualo telling me Fatty Rojo has been given a visa. Also a letter from Beatriz saying another kilo of mate has left Buenos Aires. Tomorrow I'll see the minister's secretary and find out what they have to say about the residence permit.

The thing with the professor is just hot air, it means nothing […]. Returning from San Juan Sacatepéquez, we stumbled across a procession of frightening looking souls wearing hoods and carrying candles and a Christ on their backs. As we passed alongside, the men carrying spears shot us some nasty looks I didn't appreciate at all.

We had to take a jeep to Guatemala, which cost $5 for eight people. Today, the next day, I've spent writing, eating at the de Holsts', playing canasta and checking out the gringo's books, all in English but very interesting. My progress in that language is not enough to immerse myself in those hefty tomes, but I do have a number of journals, among them Pavlov's physiology of the nervous system.

Several days have passed with nothing to alter this useless life […]. The gringo invited me to see a Russian film about Rimsky Korsakov. Lovely music and a woman whose singing was moving but, as always, the plot was ponderous and slow, and the actors didn't bring much authenticity to their roles, except for the main character who was very convincing.

My residency permit is still up in the air. Núñez Aguilar is moving and shaking, but I don't know if anyone will listen. We'll see.

Núñez Aguilar is still moving and shaking, but not that much, and I'm not doing much about it either. The rest is the same, except that Hilda told me she's thinking of going to China, adding casually that it would be for one or two years. I advised her to think it through clearly. It's clear she

wants to leave APRA. I'm keeping to my diet. Mamá writes that Sara left her 250,000 pesos in her will, which will be a great help to her.

These are days without movement. I have no idea what will happen; all that's certain is that I am alive and not wasting time. I received another kilo of mate from Buenos Aires. Of course it's different now that the vieja [old lady] has some bread. I don't know where my residency is at—the same, I suppose. Tomorrow I'll speak to Núñez Aguilar and see what has come of it all.

More days that add nothing new to Guatemala. At times things seem bad with the residency permit, at others it seems I'll get it. Morgan turned out to be useless. I went with the gringo to Chimaltenango on the Ministry of Education bus, where a school was being named after Pedro Molina, Guatemala's famous man. Don Edelberto spoke well, but the guy from STEG[54] did no more than repeat a few political platitudes.

I've made my decision: steadfast and heroic. Within a fortnight, if nothing has come of the residency, I'll get the hell out of here. I'm thinking of making a game of it: I've already told the boarding house, and I'll put everything in a safe place, in boxes that I'll get from Ernesto Weinataner. Otherwise, little to report. We saw a performance of Sophocles' Electra—very bad […]. A kilo of adrenalin arrived, sent by Alberto from Venezuela, as well as a letter asking me to come, or rather, suggesting that I should. I don't really want to go.

The medicine Alberto sent from Venezuela is of sufficient quantity and quality alone to improve my spirits. But they've also summoned me to the police station—a step prior to residence— after a siege at the ministry that was worse than Dien Bien Phu,[55] whose fall strengthens my conviction that Asia will free itself from the colonialists.

My life is so monotonous it's almost not worth writing anything. On Monday I'm thinking of starting at Cardiolopina and la Halner, so that everything is ready to leave on Friday. I'm paid up to Saturday. I don't think my affairs will be resolved before then, so I'll go to Quetzaltenango […], spend whatever time I can there and come back for one day to speed things up, before heading off again across country. We'll see (a formula I abandoned some time ago).

The day is coming when I'll take off in some new direction. I've now burned my bridges, announcing with a great fanfare that I'm leaving. If Lily's invitation holds, I'll go to Quetzaltenango… if not, I'll head for the lake and try to climb some volcano or other. If none of that works out, I'll head for the Quiriguá region, if possible, with the gringo's equipment. The residency is still at a standstill. I don't know when it will come through, and I don't care […]. Julia Mejías has just given me a suitcase to fill with books and put into storage. I'll probably leave my clothes at the gringo's place, as Helena said nothing more on the phone so that river has run dry.

News has come through suggesting that the executive will now issue permits within a fortnight. It would be amazing if it's true and they give me residency. I've got news from Buenos Aires that four kilos of mate are coming to me via ship, which will take a couple of months, but it doesn't matter. They're also sending me El Gráfico. Nothing else is new.

A lot of water has gone under the bridge. I left the boarding house on the appointed day, to the consternation of the whole family. The same day I went with Hilda to San Juan Sacatepéquez […]. I slept all night there weathering the storms, with my backpack for company because I couldn't leave it outside. On the way there I had asthma, but was pretty much fine on the way back. Meanwhile, my business at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was settled, in the sense that I had to leave the country. But Carlos Zachrison found me $20 and after a few days of sleeping in different places I headed for El Salvador.[56] At first I had some difficulties at the border, but found a way around them and in Santa Ana they gave me the correct visa for six months in Guatemala. It seems this has solved some problems.

El Salvador

At the Salvadoran border I met a Mexican, stranded for some problem with his exit papers, who had to return to San Salvador. We became quite friendly and he gave me his address if I'm ever in Mexico. I requested a visa for Honduras, which was supposed to come through by Saturday night, but then I went to the port and stayed there Friday, Saturday and Sunday, so I know nothing about the visa. In San Salvador I spoke to Hercilia's doctor friend, who did not recognize her as Sra. Guevara, and who has just left with Hernández. Tomorrow, Monday, I'll visit him for a while and then leave for Honduras or Guatemala, depending on whether or not they give me the visa. Life has been good at the port, but I got sunburned and on the last day I couldn't swim because it would have been criminal to go back out in the sun.

I chucked in the diet and the consequences can already be seen. My next course will be decided tomorrow.

A day in San Salvador, a day not exactly boring but disappointing, with anxiety posing as hunger, or maybe vice versa. No news from Honduras, and I will only wait until tomorrow, as my reserve of dollars has disappeared. I met the Moreno couple, nice and very friendly, although they didn't invite me to eat. Tomorrow I'll give them a letter for Hercilia, as they're heading to the United States next week. I spent the day reading an early history of El Salvador, which I should finish tomorrow, then perhaps I'll visit the museum. I threw my diet out the window so we'll see what happens.

I delivered a letter for Hercilia to the Morenos and they invited me to eat with them, not a particularly large meal but enough to appease my hunger. Then I took a van to Santa Ana and from there to Chalchuapa, and the ruins of Tazumal, which I discovered were closed to the public. I had to make camp in a strategic position under a street lamp, where I could read. A short while later a lady noticed me and offered me some hot water and a hammock to sleep in. Discussing Guatemala, as usual I put my foot in it and said it was more democratic than El Salvador. It turned out the owner of the house was the town's commander.

The Tazumal ruins form part of a vast complex that extends over several kilometers, although only the temples are still standing. There are signs of the mingling of Mayan civilization with their Tlaxcaltecan conquerors, which gave rise to the pipil race. The principal building is a huge quadrangular pyramid, at one time probably crowned with a small temple. It is constructed of stone and mud staircases, covered with a clay mixture very similar to modern cement. As a whole, it does not have the solemnity of Incan constructions. For ornamentation there are only two or three carved friezes, but the weather has destroyed them and they give no clear sense of the people who lived there.

The entire construction was buried beneath earth and a small stand of trees, and lay undiscovered for many years. In 1942 a North American archaeologist, Boxh,[57] began excavations, and these have continued with huge success to the present, despite the reluctance of the Salvadoran government to finance the project. The method of construction was apparently concentric, enclosing each new temple with its larger successor, for an unspecified period that may have been the 52 years of the Mayan century. There are 13 concentric layers, and the last of these—in addition to the pyramid—forms a kind of playing field and a semi-quadrangular area. Alongside the great pyramid, which is predominantly Mayan, there is a much smaller one that bears all the signs of being pipil and which, despite its size, rises above the first. It was probably crowned with a temple, although not even the slightest trace of this remains. The great pyramid had no protection from the weather, so the outer layers have suffered most, and some have been almost completely lost.

I left my address with the caretaker and hitched back to San Salvador, as I'd forgotten to collect my exit permit. Almost immediately I got a van to Santa Tecla, and from there hitched to Santa Ana as it was getting dark. I slept at the highway exit close to the border.

Guatemala

I started out early on foot but a jeep soon gave me a free ride and then a car took me across the border and on to Progreso. From there I walked some 20 kilometers until a truck picked me up and took me past Jalapa. This is a very beautiful region climbing progressively higher, filled with green pines and blanketed almost entirely in low cloud. There was something enchanting about the place, which I had not previously felt in Guatemala, although that might be because I had never been to this kind of place before. I was already very tired when I began the descent on foot. My backpack turned to lead and the suitcase was agony on my fingers, so that as soon as night came I staggered into the first house I found and asked for lodging. I negotiated the best deal of my whole trip there when they got me to swap my good torch for one that was complete rubbish, and like a fool I agreed to it.

I continued at a sluggish pace, but my shoulders and my feet eventually brought me to a halt. A truck picked me up, but it charged me 40 cents to Jalapa station, from where I took the train back to Progreso. A woman took pity on me and gave me 25 cents. I set off on foot, but had done no more than 4 kilometers when a jeep stopped and took me to El Ranchito, where the Motagua River is 100 meters wide and quite torrential because of the altitude. I bathed, washed my clothes and treated my feet with paper so that they would hold out a little longer. I kept walking for about another 5 kilometers until reaching a fairly deep river without a bridge. A truck full of road workers picked me up and took me to Uzumatlán, where I slept the night. There my travelers' tales became somewhat embellished and I had to watch out so that the various versions matched. The route to the Atlantic is fairly advanced and only a few bridges are needed to make transit possible. At that time of year the rivers are swollen and can't always be crossed.

I left early the next day and walked some 13 kilometers in the full sun before collapsing and getting a truck to take me to the [illegible] station. From there I caught a train to Quiriguá and went to see the ruins, which are exactly two miles from the station. The ruins are not significant and consist of no more than some stelae and zoomorphic stones, with some polygonal stone constructions reminiscent of the lesser Incan ruins. With these kinds of structures, the Mayas didn't come even remotely near the sophistication of the Incas, although a certain affinity between the two is apparent. Where they surpassed the Incas is evident in the dimensions of the truly suggestive limestone figures that are reminiscent the Hindu ruins in Asia. There was one stele in particular, a figure with a rounded face, wearing oriental-like pants, its legs crossed in a similar manner to a Buddha. Another has a face with the same features, tapering to a triangle, in the shape of a pear, rather like Ho Chi Minh's beard. One of the zoomorphic stones has a whole number of friezes or bas-reliefs which, according to the explanatory notes, are considered to be the apex of indigenous American sculpture. Morley,58 however, has published photographs of examples that seem better to me. In any event, the landscape is profoundly inspiring, with its silence, its grand trees, its moss that now grows over the stelae—which are so mysterious, with their graceful hieroglyphics, you almost want to caress them. If it weren't for the notices and the metal strips around each monument, you might think you'd arrived on Brick Bradford's time machine, that hero of storytelling. I slept on the floor at the station, protected from the mosquitoes by the sleeping bag that has been extremely useful.

In the morning I introduced myself to Dr. Díaz, a reactionary Indian, who nevertheless showed me the necessary courtesy and found me some food at the hospital. A waiter, who was also the local photographer, accompanied me to the ruins and took six photos, charging me only for the film and giving me a few more pictures as a present. Even so, I was very low on funds, although I still had enough to get back. I decided to go straight to Puerto Barrios instead, but because the train was delayed by a rock fall, I only arrived after 12.30 and slept in the station.

The next day, the tricky problem of finding work presented itself, but I found some doing roadwork on the Atlantic highway.59 The job involves working 12 hours at a stretch, from 6 at night to 6 in the morning, and it is quite a killer even for guys in better shape than me. By 5:30 a.m. we were automatons—or "ninepins," as they describe drunks here.

I worked a second day, the critical one, with much less enthusiasm, but still made it to the end—a sign of what was to come. But then one of the foremen offered to get me a railway pass, which is very good for them, considering they usually only pay for it several days after the work is completed. The work is already lighter and, if it weren't for the mosquitoes, which screw up the beauty, and the lack of gloves, which shreds your hands, it would really be quite bearable. I spent the whole morning dozing in my "residence" next to the sea, after a summary wash of my socks and shirts. I have become a perfect pig, covered in dust and asphalt from the head down, but I'm also quite content. I've got the ticket; the old woman at whose place I ate meals told me to pay a dollar to her son in Guatemala, and I have proved to myself that I am capable of handling whatever comes my way— even more if it weren't for the asthma.

Now I am installed on the train, throwing myself a banquet on the dollar that a semi-educated foreman gave me.

[Approximately the end of April 1954]

Vieja, my own vieja60

You won't believe that I can begin to gladden dad's heart, but there are signs that things are improving and the outlook with regard to my economic prospects is not so dire. I have no problem telling you when tragedy strikes only because it happens to be true and I assumed that the old man would regard me as being tough enough to take whatever comes along. But if you prefer fairytales, I can tell some very beautiful ones. Since I've been silent, my life has been as follows: I headed off with a backpack and a briefcase, half walking, half hitching, only half (shame!) paying my way, thanks to the $10 the government itself had given me. I reached El Salvador and the police confiscated some books I was bringing from Guatemala, but I got through and managed to obtain the visa to re-enter Guatemala (and this time the correct one). I set about visiting the ruins of the pipiles, a race of Tlaxcaltecas that set out to conquer the south (their center was in Mexico), and they remained here until the Spaniards came. The ruins are nothing like the Mayan constructions, and even less like those of the Incas.

Then I went and spent a few days at the beach while waiting for my visa to come through. I had asked for it in order to visit some splendid Honduran ruins. I spent the nights by the sea, in a sleeping bag I have acquired, and, although my diet was not entirely strict, I was in fine shape from this healthy lifestyle, except for some sunburn. I befriended some guys who, like everyone

in Central America, are good drinkers, and gave them a piece of Guatemalan propaganda and recited some little verses in deep red. The result: we all ended up in the slammer, but they let us out after a word of advice from a commander, a fine fellow, who suggested I sing to the evening roses and other things of beauty. I preferred to vanish like a sonnet into the smoke. The Hondurans denied me a visa for the simple fact of my living in Guatemala although, I should say, it was my healthy intention to check out the strike that has taken off there that has the support of 25 percent of the entire working population, a high figure anywhere but extraordinary in a country where there is no right to strike and the unions must organize clandestinely. The fruit company is furious and, of course, Dulles and the CIA want to intervene in Guatemala because of its terrible crime of buying arms on whatever market it could, since the United States hasn't sold them as much as a single cartridge for a long time […].

Naturally, I didn't consider the possibility of staying on there. On the way back, I headed off on semi-deserted roads with my wallet in a terrible state because here a dollar is worth about one mango,61 so even 20 don't go very far. One day I walked about 50 kilometers (maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration, but a lot anyway) and, after many days, I arrived at the fruit company hospital where there is a complex of small but very beautiful ruins. There I became totally convinced of what my Latin American blood did not want to acknowledge: that our forebears are Asian (tell the old man that they will soon be demanding his paternal authority). There are figures in bas-relief that are Buddha himself, all the details show they are exactly the same as those of the ancient Hindu civilizations. The place is really beautiful, so much so that I committed Silvestre Bonard's62 crime against my stomach and spent a dollar and a bit to buy film and hire myself a camera. Then I begged a bite to eat at the hospital but didn't even manage to get the hump half full. I had no money to get to Guatemala by train so I headed off to Puerto Barrios where I found work as a laborer unloading barrels of tar, earning $2.63 an hour for 12 hours, working as hard as hell in a place where there are ravenous mosquitoes diving at you in astonishing numbers. My hands finished up in a terrible state and my back was worse, but I confess that I was quite happy. I worked from 6 in the afternoon until 6 in the morning and slept in an abandoned house by the sea. Then I left for Guatemala and here I am with better prospects […].

(This writing isn't really my own scattered thoughts but because four Cubans are arguing right next to me.)

Next time, when things are a bit quieter, I'll send you any news I have…

A hug for everyone.

April 1954

Vieja,

As you can see I didn't go to El Petén. The son of a bitch who was supposed to give me a contract made me wait for a month, only to tell me it wasn't on. […]

I'd already given him a list of medicines, instruments and everything else, and had studied up hard on the region's most common tropical diseases. Of course, the knowledge will serve me well anyway, and more so now that I have an opportunity to work in a banana-growing region for the [United] Fruit Company.

What I don't want to miss is a visit to the ruins of El Petén. There's a city, Tikal, there, which is a wonder, and another, Piedras Negras, much less important, where Mayan art nevertheless reached extraordinary heights. The museum here has a lintel, which, although completely broken, is a true work of art by anyone's standard.

My old Peruvian friends lacked this tropical sensibility, and weren't able to create such high-quality work, apart from the fact that they didn't have the limestone from around here that is so easy to sculpt. […]

I am increasingly happy to have left. My medical knowledge is not expanding, and at the same time I'm absorbing another kind of knowledge that engages me much more. […]

Yes, I want to visit those places, but don't know when or how. To discuss plans in my situation would be to hurry a dream. Anyway, if, but only if, I get the fruit company job, I think I'll try and settle my debts here, and the ones I left there, to buy myself the camera, visit El Petén, and take myself north in Olympian style, that is, to Mexico […].

I'm happy you have such a high opinion of me. In any case, it is very unlikely that archaeology would be the exclusive concern of my mature years. It seems somewhat

paradoxical to me that I should make my life's "guiding star" the study of what is irremediably dead. I am certain of two things: first is that if I get to my truly creative phase at about 35 years, my exclusive, or at least main, concern will be nuclear physics, or genetics, or some other field that brings together the most interesting aspects of knowledge, and second is that the Americas will be the theater of my adventures in a way that is much more significant than I would have believed. I really think I have come to understand her and I feel Latin American in a way that is different from the way I feel about any other place on earth. Naturally, I will travel in the rest of the world. […]

There's little to say my about daily life that would interest you. In the mornings I go to the health department and work in the laboratory for a few hours; in the afternoons I visit libraries or museums to study a bit about the place; in the evenings I read medicine or whatever else, write letters and do domestic chores. I drink mate if we have it, and engage in endless discussions with the compañera Hilda Gadea, an aprista[63] whom I try to persuade gently to leave that shit party. She has a heart of platinum, at least. She helps me in every aspect of my daily life (beginning with the boarding house).[…]

Days pass—eventful and uneventful. I have the firm promise of a job as assistant to a medical worker. I returned my dollar. I visited Obdulio Barthe again, the Paraguayan who told me off for my behavior and confessed he thought I might be an agent for the Argentine embassy. I also discovered that his suspicion, or something along those lines, is widely held, except for the Honduran leader Ventura Ramos, who doesn't believe it. As the fight with Sra. de Holst continues, I sneak in once a day and sleep in Ñico (the Cuban's) room, who pisses himself laughing all day but never does anything. Ñico leaves on Monday, so I'll shift rooms to share with a Guatemalan friend called Coca. A Cuban (who sings tangos) sleeps in Ñico's room and has invited me to head south on foot as far as Venezuela. If it wasn't for the job they've promised me, I'd go. They've said they'll give me residency, and Zachrison has now become head of immigration. […]

Once again the days pass uneventfully. I am at the boarding house, sharing with the Cuban songbird, now that Ñico has gone to Mexico. I go day after day looking for this job, but nothing, and now they've told me to leave it for a week, and I'm not really sure what to do. I don't know whether the compañeros are still set on my not getting something or not. Little news arrives from Buenos Aires. Helenita is leaving for an unknown destination and I've stopped looking, but she will take me to her aunt's house, who will give me lunch. She's going to call the minister. I've got a good old attack of asthma, brought on by what I've been eating these last days. I hope I'll recover with a strict, three-day diet.

May 10, 1954

Vieja,

[…] My future appears brighter, and my permission for residence is advancing, although with all the typical red tape common in these places, so within a month I'll be able to go to a movie without sponging off some kind pal.

I have promised myself something I think I've already told the old man, and I've also given him a vague idea of my plans. I have decided to leave these lodgings on the 15th and head off into the open air with a sleeping bag I inherited from a compatriot who was passing through here. That way, I can get to all the places I want, except Petén, where you can't go because it's the rainy season, and I'll be able to climb a volcano or two. For some time now, I've been wanting to take a look at Mother Earth's tonsils (what a nice turn of phrase). This is the land of volcanoes to satisfy everyone's taste—those I like are the simple ones, not very high and not very active. I could get very rich here in Guatemala, but only if I put myself through the abject business of ratifying my degree, setting up a clinic and treating allergies (the place is full of fellow snufflers).

Doing this would be the most horrible betrayal of the two me's that do battle inside me—the social reformer and the traveler […].

Recent events belong to history: a feature, I think, appearing in my notes for the first time.

A few days ago, some planes from Honduras crossed the border with Guatemala and flew over the city in broad daylight, shooting at both people and military targets. I joined the public health brigades to work in the medical corps and also the youth brigades that patrol the streets at night.

The course of events was as follows: After these planes flew over, troops under the command of Colonel Castillo Armas, a Guatemalan émigré in Honduras, crossed the border and advanced on the town of Chiquimula. The Guatemalan government, although it had already protested to Honduras, let them enter without putting up any resistance and presented the case before the United Nations.

Colombia and Brazil, docile instruments of the Yankees, drew up a plan to hand the matter over to the OAS but this was rejected by the Soviet Union, which favored a cease-fire agreement. The invaders failed in their attempt to get the masses to rise up with the weapons they had dropped from planes, but they did capture the town of Bananera and cut off the Puerto Barrios railway line.

The goal of the mercenaries was clear: to take Puerto Barrios and then ship in various arms and more mercenary troops. This became clear when the schooner Siesta de Trujillo was captured as it tried to unload arms in that port. The final attack failed but in the hinterland areas the assailants committed extremely barbarous acts, murdering members of SETUFCO (the union of the United Fruit Company workers and employees) in the cemetery, where hand grenades were thrown at their chests.

The invaders believed they only had to say the word and the people would rise up as one to follow them, and that's why they parachute-dropped weapons, but the people immediately rallied to defend Árbenz. Although the invading troops were blocked and defeated on all fronts until they were pushed back beyond Chiquimula near the Honduran border, the pirate airplanes kept attacking the battlefronts and towns, always coming from bases in Honduras and Nicaragua. Chiquimula was heavily bombed and bombs also fell on Guatemala City, injuring several people and killing a three-year-old little girl.

My own life unfolded as follows: First I reported to the youth brigades of the Alliance where we stayed for several days until the minister of public health[64] sent me to the Maestro Health Center where I am billeted. I volunteered for the front but they wouldn't even look at me.

June 20, 1954

Dear vieja,

This letter will reach you a little after your birthday, which might pass a little uneasily on my account. Let me say there's nothing to fear at the moment, but the same cannot be said of the future, although personally I have the feeling that I'm inviolable (inviolable is not the word, perhaps my subconscious is playing a bad joke on me).

To paint a picture of the situation: For the first time, five or six days ago, a pirate aircraft from Honduras flew over Guatemala, but did nothing. The next day and on successive days they bombed several Guatemalan military installations, and two days ago a plane machine-gunned the lower neighborhoods of the city, killing a two- year-old child. The incident has served to unite all Guatemalans behind their government, and others who, like myself, have been drawn to the country.

Simultaneously, mercenary troops led by an ex-army colonel (dismissed from the army some time ago for treason) left Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, crossed the border, and have now penetrated quite deeply into Guatemalan territory. The government, proceeding with great caution to ensure that the United States cannot declare Guatemala the aggressor, has limited itself to protesting to Tegucigalpa and sending a full report of events to the UN Security Council, allowing the attacking forces to advance far enough that there would be no so-called border incidents. Colonel Árbenz certainly has guts; he's prepared to die at his post if necessary. His latest speech only reaffirmed this fact, which everyone already knew, bringing a measure of calm. The danger does not come from the number of troops that have entered the country so far, as this is minimal, or from the planes that have done no more than bomb civilian homes and machine-gun people; the danger lies in how the gringos (in this case, the Yankees) manipulate their stooges at the United Nations, since even the vaguest of declarations would greatly benefit the attackers.

The Yankees have finally dropped the good-guy mask Roosevelt had adopted, and now commit atrocities everywhere. If things reach the extreme where it's necessary to fight the planes and modern troops sent by the [United] Fruit Company or the United States, then a fight it will be. The people's spirits are very high, and the shameful attacks, along with the lies in the international press, have united even those who are indifferent to the government. There is a real climate of struggle. I have been assigned to the emergency medical services and have also joined the youth brigades to receive military instruction for whatever comes next. I don't think the tide will reach us, although we'll see what happens after the Security Council meets, which I

think is tomorrow. At any rate, by the time this letter reaches you, you'll know what to expect in this regard.

For the rest, there's nothing much new. As the Argentine embassy is currently not functioning, I've received no fresh news since a letter from Beatriz and another of yours last week.

I'm told that at any minute I'll get the job at the health department, but the offices have been so busy with the commotion that it seems a little imprudent to hassle them about my little job when they're busy with much more important things.

Well, vieja, I hope you had the happiest birthday possible after this troubled year. I'll send news as soon as I can.

Chau

Today, Saturday, June 26, the minister came by when I had gone to see Hilda; she gave me hell because I wanted to ask him to send me to the front […].

All of Guatemala's admirers have taken a terrible, cold shower. On the night of Sunday, June 28, without prior notice President Árbenz declared his resignation. He publicly accused the fruit company and the United States of being directly behind the bombing and strafing of the civilian population.

An English merchant ship was bombed and sunk in the port of San José, and the bombing continues. Árbenz announced his decision to hand over command to Colonel Carlos Enrique Díaz, explaining that he is motivated by a desire to save the October revolution and to block the United States from marching into this land as masters.

Colonel Díaz said nothing in his speech. The PDR and PRG[65] both expressed their agreement, calling on their members to cooperate with the new government. The other two parties, the PRN and PGT,[66] said nothing. I fell asleep feeling frustrated about what has come to pass. I had spoken to the Ministry of Public Health and again asked to be sent to the front. Now I don't know what to do. We'll see what today brings.

Two days full of political developments, although they have not involved me much personally. The events: Árbenz stepped down under pressure from a US military mission threatening massive bombing attacks, and a declaration of war from Honduras and Nicaragua, which would have led to the United States becoming involved. Árbenz probably could not have foreseen what would come next. The first day, colonels Sánchez and Elfego Monsón, avowedly anticommunist, pledged their support for Díaz and their first decree was to outlaw the PGT. The persecution began immediately and the embassies filled with asylum seekers; but the worst came early the next day when Díaz and Sánchez stepped aside, leaving Monsón at the head of the government with the two lieutenant-colonels as his subordinates. Word on the street is that they totally capitulated to Castillo Armas, and martial law was declared as a measure against anyone who might be found bearing any weapons of a prohibited caliber. My personal situation is more or less that I'll be expelled from the little hospital where I am now, probably tomorrow, because I have been renamed "Chebol"[67] and the repression is coming.

Ventura and Amador are seeking asylum, H. stays in his house, Hilda has changed her address, Núñez is at home. The top people in the Guatemalan party are seeking asylum. Word is that Castillo will enter the city tomorrow; I received a beautiful letter that I'll keep safe for my grandchildren.

Several days have passed now without that earlier feverish rhythm. Castillo Armas's victory was total.[68] The junta is made up of Elfego Monzón as president, with Castillo Armas, Cruz, Dubois, and Colonel Mendoza. Within a fortnight they will hold an election within the junta to see who comes out on top—Castillo Armas, of course. There's neither a congress nor a constitution. They shot the judge from Salamá, Rómulo Reyes Flores, after he killed a guard who was trying to trick him.[69] Poor Edelberto Torres is behind bars, accused of being a communist; who knows what the poor old man's fate will be.

Today, July 3, the "liberator" Castillo Armas entered the city to thunderous applause. I am living in the house of two Salvadoran women who are seeking asylum—one in Chile, the other in Brazil—with a little old woman who is always telling stories about her husband's misdeeds and other interesting matters. The hospital sent me packing and now I'm installed here…

July 4, 1954

Vieja,

Things have happened as in a beautiful dream from which you don't want to wake. Reality is knocking on many doors and the gunfire rewarding the most fervent devotees of the old regime

is beginning to be heard. Treason continues to be the birthright of the army, and once again we have proof of the aphorism that the liquidation of the army is a fundamental principle of democracy (if that aphorism doesn't exist, nevertheless I believe it) […].

The cold, hard truth is that Árbenz did not know how to rise to the occasion.

This is how it all happened: After the attacks from Honduras began, without a declaration of war or anything, in fact all the while protesting against alleged border violations, planes began to bomb the city. We were completely defenseless, without planes, anti- aircraft guns, or shelters. There were some deaths, not many. But panic took hold, especially among the "brave and loyal army" of Guatemala. A US military mission met the president and threatened a bombing campaign that would reduce Guatemala to ruins, and then there was declaration of war from Nicaragua and Honduras, which the United States would have to join under the terms of its mutual- aid pacts. The military stood up and gave Árbenz an ultimatum.

Árbenz did not consider the fact that the city was full of reactionaries, and that the homes being destroyed would belong to them rather than the people, who have nothing and who were defending the government. He did not consider that an armed people is invincible, despite the recent examples of Korea and Indochina. He could have armed the people but he chose not to, and this is the result.

I already had my little job but lost it immediately, so I'm now back to where I started, although without debts, having canceled them for reasons of force majeure. I live comfortably thanks to a good friend who is returning some favors, and I don't want for anything. I know nothing about my future, except that it's likely I'll go to Mexico. I'm somewhat ashamed to say that I've thoroughly enjoyed these recent days. That magical sensation of invulnerability I mentioned in another letter really got me going when I saw people running like crazy as the planes appeared or, at night, when blackouts meant the city was lit up with gunfire. By the way, the light bombers are impressive. I watched one heading for a target relatively close to me. It grew larger by the second as little tongues of fire flicked intermittently from its wings, and the noise of shrapnel exploding and its light machine guns firing was so loud. For a moment it was suspended in the air, horizontal, before diving sharply and quickly—you felt the impact of its bombs against the earth. Now all this is over, and you only hear the rockets of the reactionaries who have emerged like ants from under the ground to celebrate victory and hunt down communists to lynch, as they call anyone from the previous government. The embassies are full to the brim, and ours along with Mexico's is the worst. You could make a sport of all of this, but it's obvious now that the few fat cats can be easily conned.

Vieja, I'll see how I can get these letters to you. If I put them in the mail it will ruin my nerves (the president said—whether you believe it is up to you—that this was a country with strong nerves). A big hug to you all.

The asylum-seekers' situation has not changed. The novelty has worn off and everything is calm. Helenita left today by plane. The look in the German's eyes gets worse each time I see him. I won't visit him again except to pick up some things and my books.

Some fairly serious things have happened, although not in the political arena, where the only change is that illiterates have been disqualified from voting. This is a country where 65 percent of the adult population is illiterate, reducing the number who can vote to 35 percent. Of this 35, perhaps 15 support the regime. The level of fraud, therefore, does not have to be so extreme for the likely "people's candidate," Carlos Castillo Armas, to be elected. Unfortunately, I had to leave the house I'd been living in, now that Yolanda, the other sister of the two women hoping for asylum, is here and is planning to move to San Salvador. I'll see if I can go to Helenita's aunt's house.

Ernesto (left) with Eduardo García ("Gualo"), during his trip around Central America.

Photos by Ernesto Che Guevara.

With Ricardo Rojo, Luzmila Oller, Gualo García, Hilda Gadea, Oscar Valdovinos and others in Guatemala.

Holy Week celebrations in Guatemala (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

United Fruit Company hospital in Quiriguá, Guatemala, 1954 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

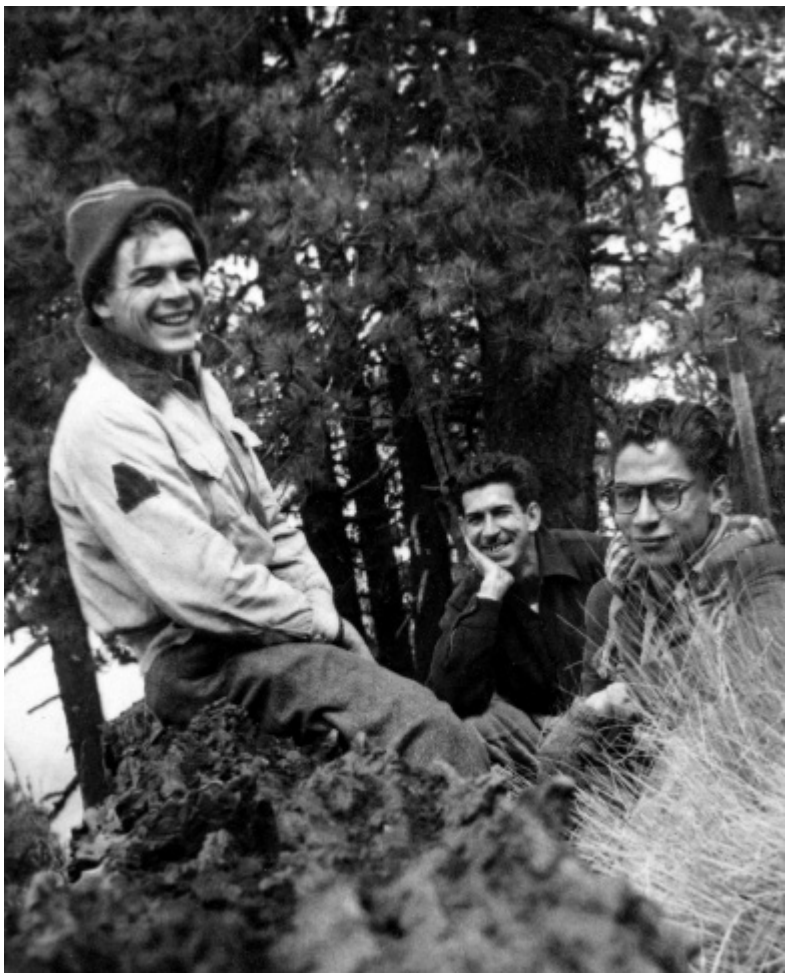
Ciudad de los Niños (Children's City), San José Pinula, Guatemala (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Edelberto Torres and his wife, some relatives and friends at Guatemala Airport, March 1954.

View of Escuintla, Guatemala (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Coatzacoalcos as seen from Allende, Mexico (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Popocatépetl volcano, Mexico (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

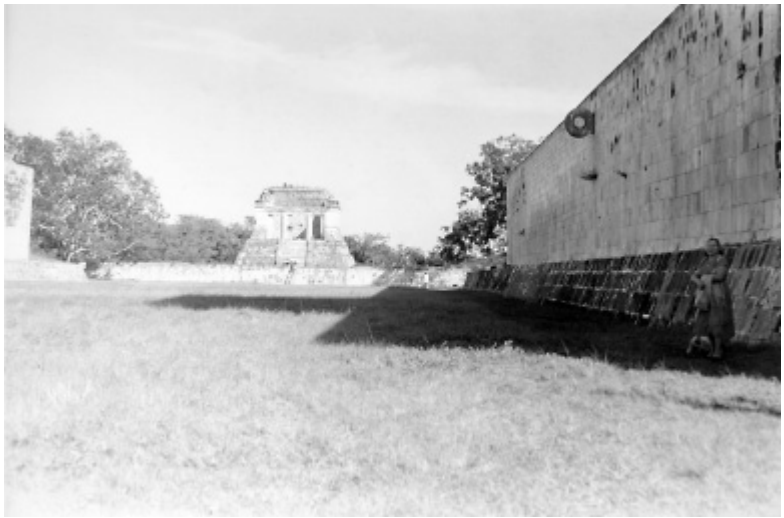


Ernesto (left) with friends attempting to climb Popocatépetl, Mexico.

Ernesto (right) with some friends, Mexico.

Ernesto at Chichén-Itzá, Mexico.

The Castle, Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).



Northern Grandstand and the Ball Court at Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

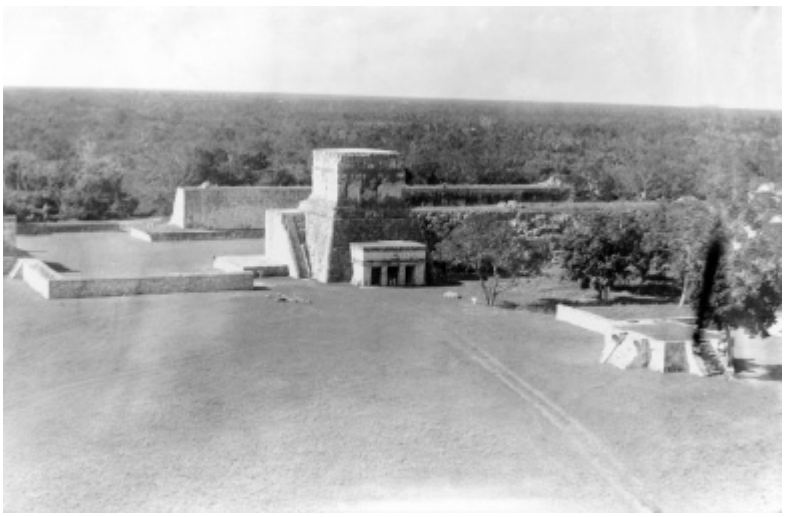
The Astronomical Observatory, Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The Plaza of the Thousand Columns, Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The Temple of Jaguars, Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

A current photo of the Temple of Jaguars, taken by Che's son Ernesto Guevara.

Plumed serpents' heads, Temple of the Warriors, Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).



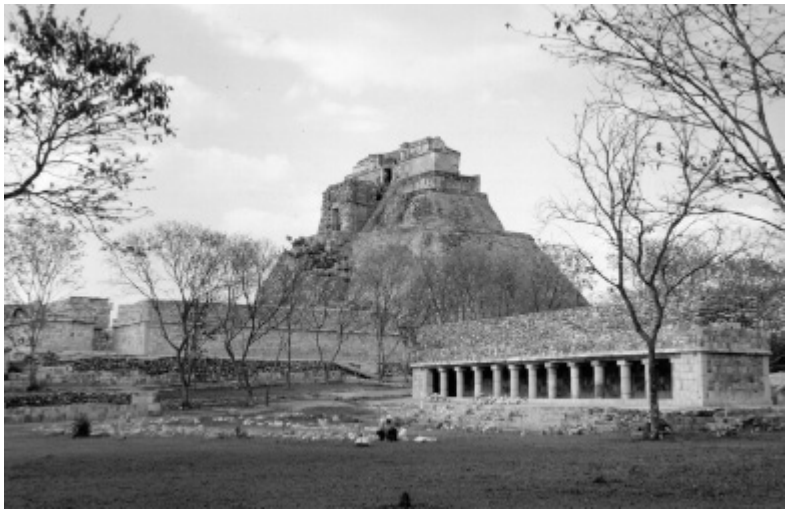
Ball Court, Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Sacrificial pool, Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

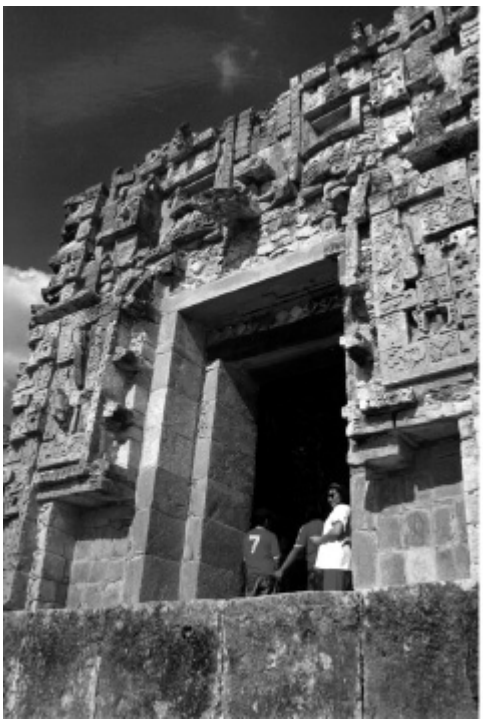
The Castle and the Temple of the Warriors as seen from the Observatory, Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The Temple of the Warriors, Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The Temple of the Magician, Uxmal, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).



Current view of Uxmal (photo by Che Guevara's son Ernesto).



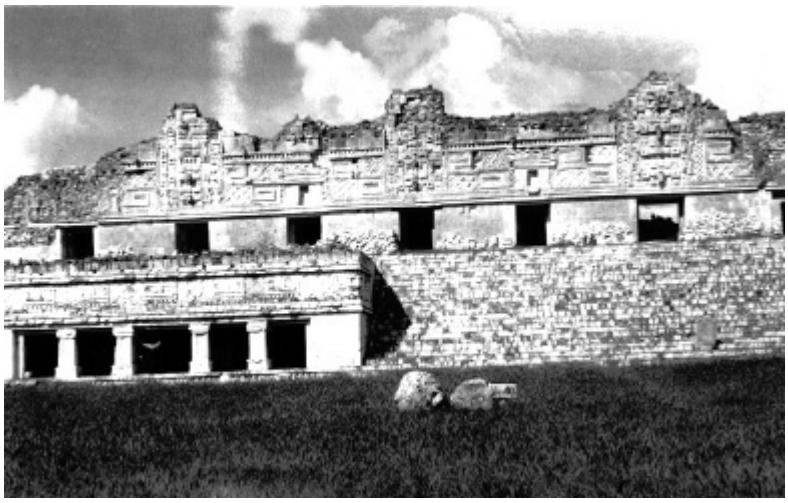
Detail of Uxmal (photo by Che Guevara's son Ernesto).

Detail of the Governor's Palace, Uxmal, Mexico (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Main facade of the Governor's Palace, Uxmal, Mexico (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Detail of the Governor's Palace, Uxmal, Mexico (photo by Che Guevara's son Ernesto).

Entrance to the courtyard of the Nuns' Quadrangle, Uxmal, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).



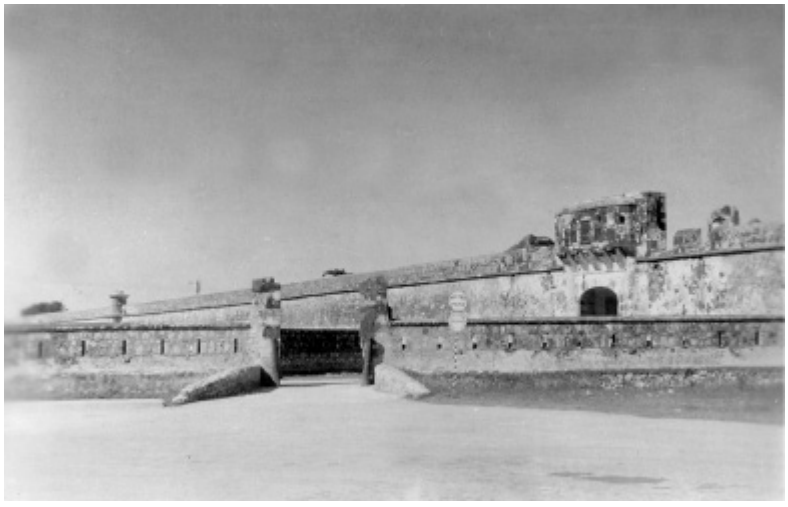
Chichén-Itzá, Mexico, 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Panoramic view of the archaeological site of Uxmal (photo by Che Guevara's son Ernesto).

Detail of Campeche Cathedral, Mexico (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Campeche Cathedral, as seen from the marketplace (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Ernesto Che Guevara in Campeche, Mexico.



Earth Gate at the Fortress of Campeche (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Catemaco Lake, Veracruz, Mexico (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Alvarado Port on the Papaloapan River (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Banks of the Papaloapan River (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Ernesto on a ferry, crossing the Papaloapan River, Mexico.

Boca del Río, a small fishing village (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The Temple of the Inscriptions and the Tomb, as seen from the Observatory, archeological ruins of Palenque in Chiapas (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Hieroglyphs at Palenque (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

View of the Temple of the Count and the Northern Palace, Palenque (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Waterfall, Palenque (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The Medallion, Palenque (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The Mexican quartet in the Pan-American Games, Mexico, March 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Rob Richard jumps over the 4.5-meter bar in the high jump competition at the Pan-American Games, Mexico (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The final of the 1,500-meter race, Pan-American Games, Mexico 1955 (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The Argentine athlete Beckler finishes in first place in the relay race (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

The athlete Juan Carlos Miranda, from Argentina, Pan-American Games, Mexico (photo by Ernesto Che Guevara).

Climbing Popocatépetl volcano, August 1955.

Ernesto (center), Mexico City.

In the yard of Miguel Schultz prison, Mexico City.

Ernesto (center) with Reinaldo Benítez Nápoles, Alberto Bayo and Universo Sánchez in the Mexican prison.

Ernesto (front left) with some of the future Granma expedition members, and María Antonia in the prison yard in Mexico.

Now I'm settled in the new house. I keep going to the Argentine embassy, although today it was closed. Nevertheless, because today was July 9,[71] I managed to get in this evening. There is a new ambassador, Torres Gispena, a stocky little pedant from Córdoba. I wolfed down a few things, but there wasn't much to eat. What a guy has to put up with! I met some interesting people at the embassy. One of them, Aguiluz, has written a book on land reform; another, Dr. Díaz, is a Salvadoran pediatrician and a friend of Romero's from Costa Rica.

Asthma is fucking with me after what I ate at the embassy. Otherwise nothing much has changed. I got a letter and a photo from my old lady, and a letter from Celia and Tita Infante […].

Cheché[72] must have been granted asylum in the last few hours. We agreed he would present himself at the embassy at 6:30 p.m. My plans are very fluid, but it's most likely I'll go to Mexico—although it's within the realm of possibility that I might try my luck in Belize.

Belize is a fair way away. Near or far, I can't really tell, because I'm at one of those crossroads when a bit of lateral pressure could change my course completely. If everything works out well, now that I've asked for and been granted asylum, I'll soon be safe and sound in the embassy. On one of the many days I went there, after I had just finished the article and was thinking of going to Hilda's, I came across a girl (the sister of the landlady at the boarding house where Hilda was staying) who told me that soldiers of the liberation army had come and taken away the landlady and Hilda. They quickly released the landlady, but Hilda is still in the lock-up. I was at a loss for a few days, but in the end I asked for asylum, and here I am enjoying fresh food in the company of a diverse group of people including, most notably, Cheché.

Several days as a refugee have passed. Hilda has been released, or so it seems. The paper reported that she went on a hunger strike and that the minister promised to release her two days ago. Asylum doesn't qualify as boring, but it is sterile—you can't pass the time as you might choose, owing to the number of people here. My asthma is bad and I feel like getting the hell out of here, but a problem has come up with my Mexican visa. Hilda hasn't come. I don't know whether she's able to visit but doesn't know where I am, or whether she's not able to visit at all. If there's no great danger, I'll leave and calmly make my way to Lake Atitlán. Nothing has been happening politically, except that Decree No. 900 on land reform has been declared unconstitutional.

Several more days have passed in a rather sterile atmosphere. All those taking refuge here are pretty good people; the most interesting is Pellecer. I already have my special food—well more or less special—and I sunbathe every morning, so I'm in no hurry to leave. I know absolutely nothing about Hilda. I sent her a message but got no answer; I don't know if she received it. The political situation hasn't changed, except that they're stepping up the repressive measures. Pellecer and I discussed Árbenz's decision to renounce the presidency. I don't think he himself has a clear idea of whether the situation was resolved in the best possible way. I believe it wasn't.

Several more days of confinement, characterized by profound boredom, regular asthma attacks, two ruptured vaporizers and a search for those who were in Helenita's house (with the surprise discovery that she is back in Guatemala). Life is monotonous and undisciplined, with senseless discussions and the wasting of time in every imaginable way.

The main development was continuous gunfire from dawn on Monday. It was hard to know what was happening, but gradually rumors began to circulate, making it possible to get a better picture. Yesterday, a parade of troops from both the regular and the liberation armies effectively humiliated the regular army.[73] Later, some army cadets were insulted by a few members of the liberation army, triggering an outburst. At first it was only the cadets against the liberation army, but as the day wore on the entire army got behind the cadets, although without much enthusiasm. In the end, the cadets made the liberation army surrender and march through the city with their hands in the air. The army was then in complete control, and made an attempt at a coup d'état, but as always the soldiers lacked resolve. The next day, Castillo Armas gave an incoherent speech, muttering inanities at the people, who booed at Monzón's name; but by the time he appeared the air base had swung around again and he was in control of the situation. He detained some soldiers, and again spouted some strident anticommunist rhetoric that was supported by the reactionaries. Castillo Armas apparently maintains power thanks to Yankee support and to the instability and indecision of those in the army. I know nothing new about the safe-conduct passes; my name doesn't appear on the list of those given asylum.

Several more unremarkable days have passed in the embassy. The government of Castillo Armas is now completely consolidated. Several military men were incarcerated and that was the end of it.

My cohabitation with a number of people who sleep here in the embassy has given me the chance to make a superficial analysis of each one of them.

I'll begin with Carlos Manuel Pellecer: From what I gather, he was a student at the polytechnic during Ubico's period, during which he was tried and expelled. He went to Mexico, and later turned up as an attaché at the Guatemalan embassies in Britain and Europe, already a communist. Back here, he was a member of parliament and a peasant leader at the time of Árbenz's fall. He's an

intelligent man and seems quite brave. He has great sway over all the comrades who have taken refuge here, although I don't know if this is due to his personality or the fact that he is head of the party. He's always standing straight, with his feet together, as if at attention. He wrote a book of verse some years back, a common affliction in this part of the world. His Marxist formation is not as strong as other figures I have met, and he hides it behind a certain temper. My impression is of a sincere but hot-headed individual, one of those ambitious personalities who through some slip-up might find himself violently rejecting his faith, but who is also capable of making the greatest sacrifice at any given moment.74 In other conversations, I've come to realize he has a profound grasp of the agrarian question.

Another day in the series, with the news that shining in the distance are 120 certificates they say will be handed out this week. This doesn't affect me, but I'm waiting anxiously for Hilda to arrive, having asked her to come so I can find out what's happening outside.

Today's analysis, Mario de Armas: He's Cuban, from the Orthodox Party founded by Chibás, not an anticommunist, a straightforward guy who was a railway worker in Cuba and participated in the failed assault on the Moncada barracks. He took refuge in the Guatemalan embassy and then came here. He has no political training at all and is your average happy-go-lucky Cuban. But he is a good compañero and obviously an honorable man.

Yesterday it was announced that foreigners will be given safe-conducts, so a mighty row is brewing. A chess competition has also begun in which I won the first two games, one against one of the four best players (among whom I count myself). An average player beat the one I was most afraid of, leaving two of us quite well placed.

Today it's José Manuel Vega Suárez, alias Cheché: a Cuban, tough as old boots, who lies like an Andalusian. I know nothing concrete about his life in Cuba, but it seems he played the wise guy and Batista's police beat him up and threw him on a railway line. He was an anticommunist. He entertains us with exaggerations that are in no way malicious. He's like a big kid, selfish and bad-mannered, who thinks that everyone should submit to his whims. He eats like a biguá.75

The list of safe-conducts has been announced, and it includes the two Cubans and the Nicaraguan engineer Santos Barroterán who's an expert on the United States, and I know he is part of the Nicaraguan leadership-in-exile. When another Nicaraguan, Fernando Lafuente, was arrested, he said a Nicaraguan engineer could provide a reference for him. They asked if that man was an authority on the United States; when he said yes, he was thrown into jail immediately. He was released when Árbenz fell, but now has the reputation of being a spy (rather hastily assigned, in my view). He has proven to be intelligent, to some extent a Marxist, and well versed in world events. He is a skeptic, not a fighter. His attitude wavers, possibly because of overanalysis. He's a good compañero, meticulous like an engineer, but a little tedious because his obsession for analysis takes him to extremes even in matters of little importance. His analysis of surplus value was interesting; I should study it further.

Things are fiendishly complicated. I don't know how the hell I'll get out of here, but I will somehow or other. I received a letter from Hilda telling me that Helenita Leyva has been arrested. I'm happy to hear this in one way because now there can be no doubts about her—she was suspected by the communists. Meanwhile the safe-conducts are arriving.

Roberto Castañeda is Guatemalan, a photographer by profession although he's really not very good, but he's also a dancer. He gives me the impression of someone with an artistic temperament, clear intelligence, and a perfectionist in everything he does. He has traveled behind the Iron Curtain and is a sincere admirer of it, although he did not join the party. He lacks a knowledge of Marxism and perhaps wouldn't make a good militant because of these bourgeois flaws, shall we say, but there is no doubt that when the action starts he'll be with us. He seems a wonderful personality in his relationships, and he has practically none of a dancer's effeminacy.76

Another day without any great conquest over my lazy disposition. Florencio Méndez: a member of the PGT. He was in Chiquimula with the government troops and saw the town fall due to the treachery of its defenders, or rather, the treachery of those leading the defense. He is a simple guy, not particularly cultured or intelligent. His Marxist formation is nil and he behaves like a simple machine obeying slogans. He is a happy-go-lucky character who probably has a congenital defect since he has a brother here in the refuge who is borderline oligophrenia. Clearly brave and loyal, with his carefree, robotic efficiency he could make the greatest sacrifice for an ideal.

Another two days without much worth adding to what's already been said. Luis Arturo Pineda: a Guatemalan, 21 years old, member of the PGT. He's a serious guy, proud of his militancy and a firm believer in the infallibility of the party, so that his highest aspirations are to be secretary of the party in Guatemala, or in Latin America maybe, and to shake hands with Malenkov. Because of his militant orthodoxy he looks with disdain upon anything not subject to party discipline. He regards himself as very intelligent, but he isn't, although he's by no means a fool. His militancy means he would make any kind of sacrifice for the party.

Two more days in which the only distraction has been waiting for Hilda; she's come to the door twice, but has not been able to get in. I'm not doing well with my asthma, so I'll take a purgative and then fast tomorrow. Felicito Alegría: a quiet, humble man, and I can't figure out just how smart he is because he's so reserved. He seems somewhat of a wild card, with strong combative qualities and a sound character. Marco Tulio de la Roca: a 20-year-old Guatemalan who apparently writes poetry, although he hasn't produced any here. He's serious and also quiet, and his half-sad smile reflects a fatalistic, thoughtful mind. I don't think he's a politically active militant. […]

Hercilia wrote from New York answering a letter of mine and telling me about the matter with María Luisa, which looks serious. Today's portrait is of Gillete: I think he's a dare-devil. He's a young guy around 18 or 20, with no great intellect. Good, and simple. His tendency is towards kilometers of verse, I don't know what it's about but I imagine it's bad. He comes out with some fairly pointed remarks, like "this thing of dying every day is quite a common sight," criticizing another of the young poets in our refuge. I haven't talked with him enough to clearly judge his poetic talents or his level of knowledge.

Another day bites the dust. Marco Antonio Sandoval: an 18-year-old Guatemalan student and poet. As a poet, he is plagued by pretensions to Neruda, and the need to meditate on death, but occasionally he comes up with a fine image. He's a romantic, and has developed into an energetic admirer of himself. He's remarkably earnest about everything concerning himself and makes grand statements about a good number of things. He is quite caustic, but lacks the nerve for sustained debate. He has no political formation and assumes everything is a political experience.

Nothing worth mentioning from the last two days. I had a go at cooking—it tired me out, even my muscles were tired by the end, showing how unfit I am. Núñez Aguilar leaves for Argentina today; I gave him the old man's address, perhaps they will speak. Valdez—I don't remember his first name—is another of the young poets in the group. I've only read one of his free verse compositions, which has a strong element of social struggle, but not that spark that distinguishes an authentic poet. He's 18, a bit of a brat like most guys his age, despite the beginnings of something more serious. He is frank and forthright, without much political ambition but capable of acquiring it over time.

Another day wasted with nothing new. Marco Antonio Derdon, alias "Earthquake": a kid with few intellectual gifts and a physique indicating a degree of hypophyseal or hypogenital infantilism, as confirmed by the fact that, while we were in the refuge, one of his testicles moved up at the same time that he suffered an indirect inguinal hernia. There's nothing attractive about him besides his pathological make-up, as it's impossible to speak of any political formation in his case.

Another null and void day. Something of an international event to break the monotony has been the suicide of President Vargas.77 It's a little disturbing as it is unclear along what path the vice-president, or those behind him, will take Brazil. In any event, I suspect tumultuous days lie ahead for the Brazilian people. On the local scale, a refugee has escaped by jumping over the wire on the wall.

Hugo Blanco, alias "Old Lady," a young poet and a bad one. I don't even think he's particularly smart. Kindness is his most distinguishing feature. The smile of a good kid always accompanies the poet.

Another day with nothing new. Alfonso Riva Arroyo: the leader of the health workers' union and interesting because of his intellectual scruples. He has the mind of a Marxist and is in open conflict with the communists. He also has insomnia, which I imagine has a psychological origin. He's a carpenter—a good one, he says. I gave him a letter for the old man. This completes my account of people in the main hall of the embassy.

Two or three days in which a lot of time has passed and one important general measure has been introduced: Perón has agreed to accept families as well, which changes the perspective for many of the refugees. One man, for example, decided to give himself up to the police because he didn't want to be separated from his family, and after announcing this and waiting for a day, he went to do so. But the police wanted to play games and would neither lock him up nor let him go; he spent a good few hours outside with his wife and children who had come to say good-bye. In the end the minister got tired of it all and let him back inside to sleep. At 2 a.m. news arrived that he had been granted permission to leave with his whole family. The following night, something less spectacular but no less important occurred. Víctor Manuel Gutiérrez78 entered over one of the garden walls and was granted asylum, but at 2 a.m. the main wing was reinforced so no one else could get in.

Raúl Salazar: a typographer around 30 years old, a simple way of thinking, possibly subnormal, who devotes himself to his work and nothing else, but all the same has some sway in the PGT. He was on the People's Court and a union leader, quite a tame one, I imagine.

In the last two days some great things have happened. Gutiérrez's entry provoked uproar in the embassy, and one of the Pinedas said something tactless about Perón's demagogy—that the granting of asylum to families was only to shit all over the communists and over Pellecer when he had tried to clarify things. Afterwards, they confined 13 of us to the garage and prohibited us from

speaking with the others; they also isolated Pellecer and Gutiérrez in a room by themselves. As if in response to this, the two younger Pinedas escaped the same night.

It was gratifying to see the fury on Banabés' face, reflecting the fury of officialdom as well. I'll continue with that group at the same time as the 13. Now there's Lencho Méndez, Luis Arturo Pineda, Roberto Castañeda, Cheché Vega and myself, leaving eight: Humberto Pineda, older brother of the aforementioned, has a similar psychological make-up, but seems better and generally in good humor, although just as restless as his brother. They certainly have their heads screwed on. José Antonio Ochoa, a typographer, a union leader with a good line, although not a member of any party. He belongs to the group of 13. He has a gentle nature, the same consistency as his chubby body, with a clear intelligence and a very consistent political line. He is cheerful, expressive and playful, a little childlike and at times melancholy. He's not capable of any heroic action, but is incapable of treachery.

As if responding to my thoughts, Ochoa has managed to get transferred to the other side, where he is content. Now there are 10 of us are left in the lock-up.

Ricardo Ramírez is perhaps one of the most capable youth leaders. Evidently the party for him is a substitute for a home, which he appears not to have had in his youth or, to be more precise, his childhood, because he's just turned 23. He's going to Buenos Aires where his experience in the party will naturally come in handy. He's highly cultured and his way of confronting problems is much less dogmatic than that of other comrades.

Of those from the embassy, the one missing from the picture I've painted is Arana, an old typographer (about 50 years old), weak and lacking any ideological foundation but loyal to the party. A man of average intelligence, he nevertheless understands sufficiently that the only real road for the working class is communism.

Several days have passed with nothing new, except that Cheché caused a row with a little whore, who is a servant here, and we are locked up more securely. Now another of "the 13" is Faustino Fermán Tino, a shoemaker. A simple mind but as loyal and sincere as anyone could be; a cheerful and steady character and a skilled shoemaker—these are his best features. Tomás Yancos, one of the older compañeros at the embassy, is an enigmatic personality. Like Rivas Arroyo, who later turned traitor, it seems he's one of those who had "certain differences" with the party, even if they were compatible with the general line.

This is wrong, and Yancos has turned out to be a son of a bitch. He's a strange character, with a brusqueness that repels people, although often he seems to be in jest. Generally, he's quite unpleasant.

Several days have passed and more or less important things have happened, most of which I've forgotten now, but most significant was the flight of Lencho Méndez and Roberto Murailles.[79] Roberto was a bit of a moron, completely impulsive and with no intellectual foundation. His loyalty is certain but nothing else I fear.

The next day, 118 refugees left in the five planes that came for them, among them Carlos Manuel Pellecer and Víctor Manuel Gutiérrez. The embassy has remained empty and I'm the only one left of the group of 13 from the kennels.

I spoke to Sánchez Toranzo and I can leave today. Varisco, a friend of Gualo García's, came on one of the planes, bringing me $150 from home, as well as two suits, four kilos of mate, and a mountain of useless stuff.

Of the 13, I have not yet mentioned "Figaro" Vázquez, the hairdresser, a man without much of an intellectual base but with great pretensions. He's not a bad type, but he reacts impulsively, not with revolutionary reason; everything he does is very ostentatious and he's fairly rabid. He was responsible for introducing a note of discord to the friendly atmosphere of the 13.

Humberto Pineda[80] is the leader of our group as acknowledged by us all and by the embassy. He is a man who has given up his violent impulses, like those of his sons, in favor of calm and reason. His intellectual ability is not particularly great and nor is his intellectual training, but he can handle anything that is expected of him and is a good militant.

Eduardo Contreras is a teacher, small in stature and in age, a very good person, cheerful and mischievous, with a certain theoretical formation and strong practical experience. Brave and loyal. At times he's a little pedantic, but it's neither unpleasant nor offensive.

I walked to freedom with no problem and immediately paid my first visit—a romantic one. I went to sleep at old Sra. Leyva's place and visited F.U., who never sent me the article, so there is nothing concrete against me. Today I'll see if I can get my passport back, and if there's no problem tomorrow morning I'll go to check out Atitlán and Quetzaltenango. I'll borrow a camera.

July 22, 1954

Dear Beatriz,

[…] It's been a lot of fun here, with all the shooting, bombing, speeches and other touches that have broken the monotony of my life.

I leave in a few days for Mexico, I'm not sure exactly when, where I think I'll make my fortune selling little whales to hang around the neck. […]

Anyway, I will be ready to go the next time something breaks out, and I'm sure it will (if there is a next time), because those Yankees can't stop themselves trying to defend democracy somewhere or other. […]

Big hugs from your adventurous nephew.

August 7, 1954

Dear vieja,

[…] Of my life in Guatemala there's nothing to say as its rhythm is that of any Yankee colonial dictatorship. I've settled my affairs here and am rushing off to Mexico.

August 1954

Dear viejos [Old Folks],

[…] I took refuge in the Argentine embassy, where they treated me very well, but my name didn't appear on the official list of those given asylum. Now the whole torment is over and I'm thinking of going to Mexico in a few days—but until further notice write to me here. […]

I think you sent too much clothing and spent too much on me; I'll look like a toff, which I don't deserve (and there is no sign that I'll be changing in the near future). I won't be able to use all the clothes because my latest motto is to travel light, with the strong legs and stomach of a fakir. Give a friendly hug to the Guatemala gang and please treat the guys who end up there as well as possible.

When all this settles down and things assume a new rhythm, I'll write to you more concisely. For all of you, a hug from your first-born. I ask you to forgive me for the scare and to forget about me. What comes always falls from the sky. No one dies of hunger in the United States or, I suspect, in Europe.

Chau,

Ernesto

Guatemala, August 1954

Dear Tita [Infante],

I don't know when you will receive this letter, or even if you will—that's now conditional on the final route of the courier. For this reason I won't give you an account of how things have gone here, it's only my aim to introduce the courier […], a medical student who has chosen Argentina as his homeland for the duration of his exile from Guatemala. The courier belonged to one of the bourgeois parties that cooperated loyally with Árbenz until his fall, and concerned himself with the fate of the semi-exiled Argentines around here. For all these reasons I'd like you to help by giving him advice when he needs it […]; he'll experience the natural disorientation of running around on the pampas for the first time.

I'll say nothing about myself because it's easier to write again before this letter of introduction reaches your hands. Have no doubt, I'm continuing my voluntary exile and heading for Mexico from where I'll make the great leap to Europe and, if possible, China.

Until it materializes some place in the world, receive an ever affectionate and epistolary embrace from your friend,

Ernesto

Atitlán is not better than the lakes of southern Argentina—not even close. Apart from the fact that this is no time for delivering final judgments, I dare to do so anyway, as the difference is so immense. After checking out the lake, I went to Chichicastenango and learned some really fascinating things about the lives and particularly the customs of the Indians, but in doing so I

drank some rum and ate who knows what, resulting in an asthma attack. I was also throwing money away, so I returned to Guatemala City. The next day I collected my passport and exit visa, and within a day I had the visa for Mexico. Today, Sunday, I've said my farewell to Guatemala with a little trip to San Juan Sacatepéquez, including a few passionate embraces and a little quickie. Tomorrow I'll say good-bye to those I want to farewell, and on Tuesday morning I'll begin the great Mexican adventure.

Mexico

The first stage of the great adventure has concluded happily, and here I am installed in Mexico,[81] *although I have no idea about the future. I left [Guatemala] accompanied by my slight misgivings; I reached the border where I got through ok, but the professional swindling really began on the Mexican side. I joined up with a good kid from Guatemala, an engineering student called Julio Roberto Cáceres Valle,*[82] *who also seems to have the travel bug. I'm thinking of moving on to Veracruz to try to take the great leap from there.*

We traveled to Mexico City together but now I'm on my own. Maybe he'll come back.

The only really interesting thing during the trip was an excursion to the excavations at Mitla, near Oaxaca. They are old Mixtec mines, apparently not very important, consisting of several rectangular patios surrounded by rectangular structures with rectilinear decoration.

There are one or two underground constructions the exact purpose of which is unclear, but could have been the dressing rooms of important people. It seems the roofs were supported, at critical points anyway, by rounded, slightly conical pillars made from a kind of cement. All the constructions are made from stone, held together by wood and gravel, and have been re-touched with a kind of cement. Here, there is neither the magnificence of Machu-Picchu, nor the evocative beauty of Quiriguá, not even the emotional power of the Salvadoran excavations, but there are definitely interesting elements and a foretaste of the wonders to discover here in Mexico. Today, or maybe tomorrow, I'll go and see U.P.,[83] *given that Harold White is not here and seems to have left for the United States.*

Days of feverish ineffectiveness have gone by, in which I called on Petit; he took me out for a walk and we discussed politics. He has a nice daughter, but she is in the middle of a typical bourgeois-clerical education. Petit is obviously a deserter, who covers his tracks by quoting the pope and speaking of Catholic love as the only true kind, etc. We visited the ruins of Teotihuacán, or something like that. There are enormous pyramids without artistic merit, but there are others of value. I'll go and see them again sometime and take note of more detail—this time I only took a picture of Marta Petit with my new camera, a 35-exposure Zois 1 Kon 1:35.

Several empty days have passed. Since the very friendly chat with Petit, I called to leave my telephone number, and we haven't spoken again. I visited Helenita […]. October 5 is her birthday so I'll visit her again and take her the book El poema pedagógico.

I also visited the museum of Mexican art, although, as usual, I didn't see everything; I found the examples of ancient culture fascinating, the collection contains some authentic works of art. I liked two busts, a Mayan and an Aztec, and an obsidian vessel in the form of a stylized monkey. There is also a very interesting monumental head with African features. Besides these things of interest, of course, come the paintings of the famous quartet: Rivera, Tamayo, Siqueiros and Orozco. Siqueiros had a particularly strong impact on me, but they all seemed very good, although the murals are badly situated for viewing properly.

Life in Mexico is appallingly bureaucratic. Petit is now behaving like a donkey. The latest news is that Hilda is in Mexico, at Tapachula (although in what circumstances I'm not sure), and that I visited Dr. Icharti, a young Peruvian who made a good impression, although I don't know what he'll be able to do for me. I am working as a photographer in the park. We'll see what comes of it—they're promising me a thousand things.

Several days have passed, and in general I can say that apart from the bitterness at not being able to study anything but medicine during the day, I've managed to achieve some things. On Monday I'll see about a medical position, on Wednesday one of the others; in the meantime I'll continue with photography and getting to know people.

Francisco Petrone is by no means a communist, but he is sincere and convinced that his position is correct. He's not what you might call a cultured type, but he comes into his own when in the right role. I observed his management style and found it pretty good. The great god Brown, on the other hand, was assassinated by the academics. Petit and I have clashed to the point of a total split; at least he won't give me any more grief. It seems Hilda and I have reached a status quo, we'll see…

I am still working discreetly at photography, but you need to be fit and always on the go. I'm establishing myself at the hospitals and I think I might have work, although not in the Institute of Nutrition. I've moved to a decent room in the center of the city, costing me 100 pesos a month. It has a bathroom for both of us (El Patojo) and access to a kitchen. The landlady is fat and ugly with a face that says she likes to gossip.

The photography isn't going badly, and medicine looks promising. I'm earning a living […]. Right now my intellectual life is nonexistent, except for some reading at night and a tiny bit of daily study. I still haven't seen the González Casanovas and don't know when I will. I'll see Hilda tomorrow.

A bit of water has passed under the bridge. In general, things are as follows: To survive, I really have nothing but photography, and it doesn't pay enough. This week I took roughly 60 photos, meaning a similar number of pesos (not inconsiderable), but half of them failed because of a blurred roll of film. In the medical arena, I'm working three days at each of the hospitals: the Children's and the General. At the General hospital I'm working on Pisani's food digestion, and the Children's hospital asked me to present a work plan, of which I already have an outline. I saw Icharti, the APRA doctor, and have arranged to meet him again tomorrow. I can hardly say anything about Mexico, because I haven't seen much new.

I haven't seen Petit, Petrone or Piaza for quite a while.

I still haven't met the people upstairs, although my life is more organized and there would be no great problem in visiting them. I'm busy at the hospital in the mornings, although I don't do anything, and there's not enough time in the evening to deliver the photos, so I'm in debt.

[Approximately early November 1954]

Vieja, my vieja,

(I confused you with the date)

[…]

Even Beatriz is engaging in reprisals, and those telegrams she used to send no longer come.

To tell you about my life is to repeat myself because I'm not doing anything new. Photography is bringing in enough to live on and there is really no basis for believing I might be able to give it up anytime soon, although I'm working every morning as a researcher in two hospitals. I think the best thing for me would be to slip into an unofficial job as a country doctor, somewhere near the capital. This would make it easier to devote my time to medicine for a few months. I'm doing this because I'm perfectly aware of how much I learned about allergies with Pisani. Now I have compared notes with people who've studied in the United States, and who are no fools with regard to orthodox knowledge, I think that Pisani's method is light years ahead. I want to get practical experience with the nuts and bolts of his systems so that I can land on my feet wherever that might be […].

I'm slaving away here, busy every morning in the hospital and in the afternoons and Sundays I work as a photographer, while at night I study a bit. I think I mentioned I'm in a good apartment, I cook my own food and do everything myself, as well as bathing every day thanks to the unlimited supply of hot water.

As you can see, I'm changing in this aspect, but otherwise I'm the same because I don't wash my clothes very often, and wash them badly when I do, and I still don't earn enough to pay a laundry.

The scholarship is a dream I've given up on, as I had thought that in such a large country all you had to do was ask for something and it was done. You know that I have always been inclined to make drastic decisions, and here the pay is great. Everyone is lazy, but they don't get in the way when other people get things done, so I've got a free rein either here or in the country where I might go next. Naturally, this doesn't make me lose sight of my goal, which is Europe, where I'm planning to go no matter what happens.

As for the United States, I haven't lost an ounce of hostility, but I do want to check out New York, at least. I'm not in the least worried about what might happen and know that I'll leave just as anti-Yankee as when I arrive (that's if I do get in).

I'm happy that people are waking up a bit, although I don't know what direction they are moving in. Anyway, the truth is that Argentina is as insular as you can get even though in general terms the picture we get from here seems to suggest that they are taking important steps forward and that the country will be perfectly able to defend itself from the crisis the Yankees are about to set off by dumping their surplus food […].

Communists don't have your sense of friendship but, among themselves, it is the same or better than yours. I have seen this very clearly and, in the chaos of Guatemala after the government was overthrown and it was every man for himself, the communists maintained their faith and comradeship and they constitute the only group that continued to work there.

I think they deserve respect and sooner or later I'll join the party. What mainly holds me back from doing so, for the moment, is that I'm desperate to travel around Europe and I couldn't do this if I submitted to a rigid discipline.

Vieja, till Paris

The gas is out here and the old woman doesn't really want them to bring more, so my fat gut is vanishing. Now we're also working as photographers for the Agencia Latina,[84] but my first assignment turned out badly. They had me planted all afternoon at the airport waiting for some Argentine aviators, so I wasn't able to take any pictures in the park and the day was a write-off.

I've met no one new, except for some guys from the Honduran Democratic Revolutionary Party who seemed very right wing. Helenita defends them for no reason; the only proletarian traces in them are being replaced with something profoundly petit bourgeois.

Nothing new to relate now that everything is calmly on track. Piaza says "perhaps" he will get me a job selling books on the OAS stand at the book fair, as I really can't live off the photography. Otherwise, nothing new, except the news that the Guatemalan leftists are all under arrest; Celia is getting married and Hercilia is marrying an old guy with money […]. I haven't met anyone interesting lately, and I don't think I ever will if things continue like this. It looks like I'll have the bicycle in a few days.

Some fairly important things have happened over the last few days. Out in the street one day I met the head of the Agencia Latina,[85] a doctor, who took a liking to me and gave me a provisional job as a correspondent.[86] I dug out the things from Panamá-América and got a bit of money for them, not much, but probably enough to get by. The photography is a slow road. I am falling into debt, but I'm also owed money. I'm working at the hospital with no idea where it will get me.

The days have gone by with the usual chain of hopes and disappointments that characterize my proletarian life. The stand at the book fair was a dream that is now over, but now I have something new and nicer, although equally insecure: The boss of the Agencia Latina offered me a job for 500 pesos a month working three times a week writing up journalistic summaries of events in Mexico. For the moment I'm continuing as a photographer but I'm increasingly less motivated. The idea of going it alone is floating in the air but we need the cash […].

The days follow one another in rapid succession. I'm doing a lot of work on allergies and I'm in close contact with the doctors.

In general I think I'll keep at it, in the full knowledge that triumphs come hand in hand with hard knocks. On Monday I have a test at the Agencia Latina to see if I can get work there. I'm doing less and less photography because traveling all over the city for nothing is exhausting. My new salary is 700 pesos for only a few hours' work a day, but I'm still taking some photos and got 150 pesos from the OAS for some pretty crude stuff. The criticism of Petit's work seems quite harsh, but I'm thinking of going to the function in a day or two to see how things are going.

Work at the hospital goes well, although every day I realize that outside of allergies, I don't know the first thing about medicine. I'm treating two patients at each hospital. My hands are tied at the Children's hospital and I can't really do anything, but at the General I have a lot of freedom. I'd quite like to do some electrophoresis[87] experiments but don't know what results I'll get. On Sunday I went to the Virgin of Guadalupe Day, which apparently wasn't as crowded as usual. As always, it was a mixture of pagan festivities with a bit of religion: a lot of Indians dressed up to look even more like Indians, dancing to simple rhythmic music that sounds Peruvian or Bolivian.

[no date, probably around the end of 1954]

Vieja, my vieja,

It's true, I've been too lazy, but the real guilty party, as always, is Don Dinero [Mr. Money]. Anyway, the end of this wretched financial year of 1954—part of which has treated me beautifully (like your face)—coincides with the end of my chronic hunger. I'm working as an editor at the Agencia Latina for 700 Mexican pesos a month (equivalent to 700 Argentine pesos), enough to live on with the added bonus that I work for only three hours, three days a week. I can therefore spend whole mornings at the hospital, where I am creating swellings using Pisani's method. […]

I'm still working as a photographer, but also spending time on more important things, like "studying," and some strange little things that pop up around the place. There's not much left over, but this December I hope to round it out to 1,000 and with a bit of luck, we'll do a bit of photography at the end of the coming year (at the beginning, I meant to write). Contrary to what you might think, I'm no worse than the majority of photographers here, and the best among my compañeros, although yes, in this group you only need one eye to win the crown.

My immediate plans involve staying some six months or so in Mexico, which I find interesting and like a lot, and in this time apply, by the way, for a visa to visit "the children of the super power," as Arévalo calls them. If I get it, I'll go. If not, I'll see what other concrete plans I can make. I haven't abandoned the idea of slipping behind the Iron Curtain to see what's happening there. As you see, there's nothing new since earlier reports.

I'm very enthusiastic about the scientific research, which I'm capitalizing on because it won't last. I have two research projects on the run and may start on a third—all related to allergies—and very slowly I'm collecting material for a little book that will come to light (if ever) in a couple of years with the pretentious title, The Role of the Doctor in Latin America. I can speak with some authority on the subject, considering that, although I don't know much about medicine, I do have Latin America sized up. Of course, apart from a general plan and three or four chapters, I've written nothing, but time is on my side.

With regard to the changes in my thinking, which is becoming sharper, I promise you that it will only be for a short time. What you are so afraid of can be reached in two ways: the positive one, when you convince someone directly, or the negative one, through a disillusionment with everything. I came along the second path, only to be immediately convinced that it is essential to follow the first. The way that the gringos treat Latin America (remember that the gringos are Yankees) was making me feel increasingly indignant, but at the same time I studied the reasons for their actions and found a scientific explanation.

Then came Guatemala and everything that is difficult to recount. I saw how the object of one's enthusiasm was diluted by what those gentlemen decided, how a new tale of red guilt and criminality was concocted, and how the same treacherous Guatemalans set about propagating the story to get a few crumbs from the table of the new order. I can't tell you the precise moment I put reasoning aside and acquired something like faith, not even approximately, as the journey was long and there were many backward steps. […]

September 24, 1955

Dear vieja,

This time it seems my fears have come true, and the enemy you've despised for so many years has fallen. The reaction here did not take long to register: all the daily papers and foreign dispatches jubilantly announced the fall of a sinister dictator; the North Americans breathed a sigh of relief for the $425 million they can now extract from Argentina; the bishop of Mexico City was gloating at Perón's downfall; and all the Catholic right wingers I've met in this country were visibly overjoyed. My friends and I, no. With natural anxiety we followed the fate of Perón's government and the navy's threats to shell Buenos Aires. Perón fell as people of his stripe fall, without Vargas's posthumous dignity or Árbenz's energetic denunciations, when he named in minute detail those guilty of aggression.

Progressives here have defined the denoement that has occurred in Argentina as "another victory for the dollar, the sword and the cross."

I know that today you will be happy and breathing the air of freedom. […]

Not long ago, I suggested in another letter to you that the military would never hand power over to civilians without a guarantee of its caste's domination. As things stand today, it will only hand over power to a government springing from the Democratic Party, which is to say, one of the recently founded Social-Christian parties, where I imagine […][88] is active, a future honorable member of the Chamber of Deputies and perhaps, in the course of time, leader of the Argentinist Party, yet to be founded.

Wherever you are, you'll be able to say whatever you feel like saying, with the absolute impunity that comes from belonging to the ruling class, although for your sake I hope you are the black sheep in the fold. In all honesty I confess that Perón's fall has left me deeply embittered, not on his account but because of what it means for the Americas. However much it pains you, and apart from the forced capitulations of recent times, Argentina was a

champion for all of us who believe that the enemy lies to the north. To me, having lived through Guatemala's bitter hours, Argentina was a distant mirror image. When I saw that, together with the loyalist news (strange to call it that), Córdoba's voice was to be heard—theoretically an occupied city—I began to lose any clear picture of the situation. But afterwards, everything developed along exactly the same pattern: the president resigned, a junta, posing as the resistance, began to negotiate but then collapsed, superseded by a military man with a little sailor by his side (the only variation with respect to Guatemala). Then Cardinal Copello proudly addressed the nation, calculating ss would fare under the new junta. The worldwide press—in this hemisphere—launched its well-rehearsed lines; the junta refused to give Perón a passport but declared freedom for everyone. People like you will believe this is the dawning of a new day; I assure you that Frondizi89 no longer does, since in the possible event that the Radicals come out on top, he won't be the one who achieves it but rather it will be Yadarola, Santander or someone else with the blessing of the military serving the interests of the Yankees and the clergy. Perhaps there won't be any violence at first, because it will be exercised in a circle far removed from your own. […]

The Communist Party will, in time, be put out of commission, and perhaps the day will come when even Papa might feel he made a mistake. Who knows what will have become of your wandering son in the meanwhile. Perhaps he will have come back to earth on his native soil (the only one possible), or have begun a life of true struggle […].

Perhaps one of the bullets so common in the Caribbean will shorten my life (this is neither idle talk nor a concrete possibility, as there are plenty of bullets flying around here). Perhaps I'll just continue to wander around for long enough to gain a thorough education and take the pleasures I have assigned to myself for this life, before seriously devoting myself to pursuing my ideal. Life travels at a tremendous speed, and no one can predict where they will be next year or why.

I don't know if you've received the formal news of my marriage and the arrival of an heir—from Beatriz's letter it would seem not. In that case, let me tell you officially, so you can let other people know: I married Hilda Gadea and we will soon be having a child. I received the newspapers from Beatriz, which I'm very interested in. I'd like some kind of analysis about recent events, and above all a weekly copy of Nuestra Palabra.90

Chau

A kiss to the all family, and Hilda sends her regards.

The year is coming to an end and a change in my economic prospects seems certain. Science-wise I continue as before, working on food digestion and preparing to work on blood electrophoresis with Urbach equipment. At the Children's hospital, they want me to do some experimental work, with a wage and everything. I'm still working at the Agencia Latina, but I haven't been paid anything yet. My studies are at a standstill: I read very little medicine, a little more literature, but hardly ever write. Public relations progress more or less along the same road; I haven't made any new worthwhile friendships, either intellectual or sexual. Christmas Eve I'll spend snug in my sleeping bag, keeping guard over a bunch of toys. I've quit photography and at times regret it, as I'm earning nothing and that always brought in a little. Now, however, I have time to spend on other things and in the New Year I'll be a bit more disciplined. On the educational front (sic), I feel like a little old grandfather now that El Patojo, reacting to some criticism I made about his life, has decided to return to Guatemala to help his mother.

On the political plane, it is worth noting the change in the fortune of Don Edelberto Torres and his son, one released and expelled, the other a fugitive.

Nothing new to write, except that another year is over. As usual, Hilda got angry because I didn't want to go with her to a party; I spent New Year's Eve on watch at the OAS building. Nothing new to relate. The Agencia Latina hasn't paid me, perhaps they won't pay for a while, because the dough comes, or rather doesn't, all the way from Buenos Aires.

Today I feel like the good old grandfather who deals out sensible advice; El Patojo went off to Guatemala with his "jerk" of a brother. This was the result of a conversation in which I said he was running away from something, and not fighting, as he was claiming in a letter to his mother that he read to me; the next day he decided to leave, and a little bit later his brother went off to join him.

Besides the cash he'd lent me earlier, I gave him 150 pesos more, which Piaza lent me. My situation is strange because I'm counting on the salary of the Agencia Latina and they keep

stringing me along with very vague promises. In the scientific field, I have great hopes, but nothing has yet materialized. I started studying how to do electrophoresis with filter paper, and I hope to start working on it in a week or two. I'm writing home very little so I don't know much of what's happening there.

I now have my first month's pay and have already spent it, apart from what I haven't paid for but still owe. I'm not too worried because alongside Dr. Cortés, I have a patient who pays 20 pesos per consult, which happens every four days, meaning I'll have enough to eat until the next payment from the Agencia Latina. I'm on good terms with the agency, despite the fact that Dr. Pérez has taped up my mouth. I'm trying to persuade him (as a joke) to send me to see [President] José Figueres in Costa Rica. No news from El Patojo, or from home, just a Peruvian student who wrote asking for my opinion on the fall of Guatemala. The scientific work has been held up because of my unstable situation; I have to leave the house and don't know where to go.

The housing problem is still unresolved, and in every sense I'm pretty much living on air. My homemade electrophoresis machine works slowly, while the other work is virtually at a standstill. Dr. Cortés and I are looking after a patient who I believe should improve rapidly; I charge her 20 pesos a consult. I hope the coming week will be eventful […].

My patient's condition worsened. I did some further tests and she is sensitive to various foods, so I have taken her off them. Despite everything I still have no money, and there's no way of making ends meet […]. The Agencia Latina doesn't pay on time, which really pisses me off. As for the big projects, no news. Tomorrow I'll finish the article on Guatemala they asked for, then dedicate the week to writing letters, as I'm very behind with correspondence.

Everything is up in the air—these are days of uncertainty. I was paid for January and have already spent it (we're now at the end of February). Now that the Pan-American Games[91] are approaching, I'll have to work like a slave and put hospital work to the side. My patient is stable, exactly where I left her. I think I have broken with Hilda for good after a melodramatic scene. I fancy a girl who's a chemist: she's not particularly intelligent and fairly ignorant, but she has an appealing freshness and fantastic eyes. I'll present a paper at the Allergy Congress in April on cutaneous tests with food digestion.

More than a month has passed since my last entry. Much has happened, or not that much, depending on your perspective. The Pan-American Games were a shitload of work, and just when it seemed there would be no compensation a promise came through that I would get some. Almost simultaneously the inexplicable news came that the Agencia Latina was folding with the inevitable anguish about money. Now it seems they will pay me the two months they owe, plus three months' redundancy, and 2,000 pesos for the photos. This will be something like 5,000 pesos in all, which would come in handy and allow me to pay off some debts, travel around Mexico and then get the hell out of here.

The work was not pleasant, but I did make two good friends: Fernando Margolles and Severino Rossell, "El Guajiro."[92] I'm living in a new place and, as usual, I'm having trouble paying the rent. […]

Scientifically, I've promised to finish a paper for the Allergy Congress, which I think I can do. They have invited me to Nuevo Laredo, near the border with the gringos, but it would be for two years' work and I'm not up for it. My plans are simpler: Until March I'll do the allergy work and present the paper; in May, June and July I'll travel around Mexico from north to south and east to west; in July-August I'll go to Veracruz and wait for a ship to Cuba or Europe; if that's not possible, I'll be in Caracas by December. We'll see how it all works out.

A lot of water has passed under my bridge. […] I'm now an intern at the hospital. It happened like this: I went to León, Guanajuato, and presented my paper, "Cutaneous Investigations with Semi-Digested Food Antigens."[93] The paper was a minor success, and Salazar Mallén, head of Mexican allergy research, commented on it. It will now be published in the journal Alergia. Salazar Mallén promised me some financial help for research work and a position as an intern at the General Hospital, but that remains to be seen.

Nothing definite on the payment from the Agencia Latina. Other news worth noting is that I've got myself on the Mexican electoral role, thanks to the total lack of controls here. You just show up, give a name and address, and that's it. That's elections for you.

In Guanajuato I saw the famous short farces based on Cervantes, performed by local amateur players, against the backdrop of a church. Most of the actors lacked class, but the scenery was so real that it didn't matter.

After many adventures I am now established at the General Hospital and working fairly hard, although without much structure. The food is not great: if I eat it I get asthma, if I don't I go hungry. Salazar Mallén pays me 150 pesos […]. The Agencia Latina says it will pay up, meaning around 5,000 pesos—we'll see if it's true. Together with Hilda, I spend my time getting to know the area around Mexico City. We've been to see some magnificent Rivera frescoes at an agricultural school,

and also visited Puebla.

Both good and bad things have been happening. I still don't know what the future will bring. The Agencia Latina paid, but not all of it, leaving me only 2,000 pesos to pay some bills and buy some presents. I was invited to the Youth Festival but would have had to pay my own way; and as I was still counting on the money I announced far and wide that I was planning to go to Spain on July 8. Now it's all come to nothing and I'm going ahead with my plan to travel around Mexico after September 1. As a sporting event, I should mention the ascent of Popocatépetl's lower slopes by an ad hoc group of valiant Andinistas (including myself). It's wonderful and I'd like to make a habit of it. Pascual Lozano, the Venezuelan, fell behind a little before the end, even though we helped him along for the final stage. Another event has been the revolution in Argentina, which fills me with unease because my brother is in the marine corps.

A comic event was my invitation to take Hilda and a Peruvian friend to a football match. The game began smoothly with flares and ended with buckets of shit, and all three of us took hits [...].

One political event was a meeting with Fidel Castro, the Cuban revolutionary, an intelligent, young fellow who is very sure of himself and extraordinarily audacious; I think we hit it off well.[94]

A sporting event was our failed attempt to climb "Popo." We stopped a few meters from the top because Margolles's feet were frozen and he was afraid to continue.

A tourist event was Margolles's departure for the United States.

A scientific event was the appearance of my first medical paper as sole author, in the journal Alergia: "Cutaneous Investigations with Semi-Digested Food Antigens"; passable.

In physiology, I have become a cat surgeon.

Months have now passed. I'm happily married to Hilda; we've moved house and everything points toward some pleasant months contemplating the future.[95]

Politically, Perón's fall—almost inglorious—is important to note, and the seizure of power by a military clique with ties to the clergy and the centrist parties. I'm a little more focused on my studies: reading only on allergies and studying a bit of English and algebra. I'm researching only three matters, with another one maybe in the future: histamines in the blood, histamines in tubercular lung tissue and progesterone in relation to histamines. I am thinking of doing some serum electrophoresis. On another topic, I've bought a camera to replace the one that was stolen, and I'm learning to touch-type. I still don't know whether I'll get work at the United Nations; the idea repels me but the money is attractive.

Not a lot to add except that finally I made it to the top of "Popo." It was an easy climb, almost without a hitch, and we reached the lower slope by 6:30 a.m. (we didn't climb any higher). But I couldn't get any decent photos because of the thick fog. I want to get to the Yucatán soon to explore the whole Mayan region. No political news, except for my family's incendiary letters that get stuck into me for supporting Perón against the liberators.[96]

I went to a meeting to discuss Perón's fall where the reporter was a Sr. Orfila; I later learned that much of his fury against Perón was due to squabbles Perón had had with the Fondo de Cultura Económica (of which Orfila was director).[97] *Things were going well until late in the meeting, when he laid into the compañeros and I jumped up to give the gentleman a piece of my mind. But I was quite angry and couldn't get my words out; in the end I proposed that any congratulatory note should wait until the government had achieved something concrete, like democracy for the trade unions and within the economy. Orfila asserted that they couldn't pay attention to "secondary matters such as exchange controls." The socialists are headed for the shit heap.*

I have done that trip around the south-east of Mexico I was always going on about, managing to cover the Mayan region, at least superficially. We went to Veracruz by train, a thoroughly uninteresting trip. Veracruz is a small and fairly lifeless port, with all the characteristics of a little town of Spanish descent. The beaches are small, dirty and flat; the sea is lukewarm.

We came across an Argentine ship, El Granadero, and I managed to get a few kilos of mate out of them. Boca del Río is a small fishing town some 10 kilometers south of Veracruz, where I went to watch a day's fishing on La Tonina, Rosendo Rosado's boat. The lives and problems facing the fishing community are very interesting.

After five days in Veracruz, we went south by bus. We spent the first night at Lake Catemaco, but it was raining so we couldn't visit the lake itself. Then we proceeded on and spent a night at Coatzacoalcos, a fairly important seaport on a river of the same name.

I arrived with asthma. The next day we crossed the river. On the far side is Allende, and from there we took a train to Palenque, arriving at the station by night and taking a jeep to the hotel.

The ruins of Palenque are magnificent. The center of the city is on a hillside, from which it spreads out over four to six kilometers into the middle of the forest. It is still unexplored, although the extent of the site that is surrounded by thick vegetation is clear.

They have been almost totally neglected by the authorities. It took them almost four years to clean up the main tomb, one of the archaeological jewels of all the Americas. With the proper equipment and personnel they could have done it in three months. The main buildings are the Palace, with its collection of galleries and patios, their stone engravings and stucco arrises, of high artistic quality, and the Temple of the Inscriptions, also known as the Tomb, so called because its main feature is a burial place, the only one of its kind in Latin America. It is entered from the top of the pyramid, descending through a long tunnel with a trapezoidal roof, leading into a wide chamber where there is a monolithic tombstone 3.8 meters long, 2.2 meters wide and some 27 centimeters thick, adorned with hieroglyphs representing the sun, the moon and the planet Venus. Beneath the tombstone is a catafalque, a single piece cut from a stone block, which contained the body of someone important.

There are ornaments of different sizes, all worked in jade. Palenque is known for the beauty and delicacy of its bas-reliefs and stuccowork, which were achieved with a technique that was lost with the later advance of the Third Empire in which the Toltec influence was beginning to appear (with the work becoming more monumental and less sculptural).

The sculptural motifs of Palenque are more human than those of the Aztecs or Toltecs and generally depict full human figures engaged in historic events or rituals together with the main gods of their Olympus: the sun, the moon, Venus, water, etc.

According to the US archaeologist Morley's classification, Palenque is a category-two population center in the Mayan realm. (He gave category one status only to Copán, Tikal, Uxmal and Chichén-Itzá.) Archaeological research reveals that Palenque raised monuments in the first quarter of the baktún 9 (AD 435-534), more or less contemporaneous with Piedras Negras, the other artistic center of the empire. Both flourished during the First Empire. There are 19 category-two cities in Morley's classification, although recent research is lending more significance to Palenque. Whether this city is category one or not, it's undeniable that this is the city where Mayan stuccowork achieved the greatest development in terms of its technique and artistic quality.

We left Palenque at night and took a train south-east to the small port of Campeche, where we spent a day. There's not a lot to see, just the ruins of some fortresses built as a defense against pirates. Two hours on a bus took us to Mérida, a fairly large town for its kind but with a very provincial feeling. Mérida is not a seaport, and it seems like a town 500 kilometers (not just 30) from the sea. It gets quite cool at night considering the heat during the day. The museum is badly presented and resourced, but it does have some interesting things. Mérida's principal attractions are the ruined Mayan cities in the vicinity, of which we visited two of the most important: Uxmal and Chichén-Itzá.

According to the legend of Chilam Balam of Chumayel, Chichén-Itzá was discovered and populated by the Mayas during their expansion in about the fourth century, although the oldest date that can be read with any certainty corresponds to AD 878. It was a period when the cities of the old empire were being abandoned, and work on Chichén-Itzá began within the framework of the new empire. The Itza [people] had withdrawn from the city in 692 and settled in the Campeche region. Later, the Mayan renaissance, spanning roughly two centuries from 997 to 1194, saw the rise of the Mayapán League and the construction of the monuments we see today, with their Chac-Mool and plumed serpents, although the foundations they were built on belong to the earlier Mayan period. The resurgence was the result of the apparently peaceful Quetzalcoatl invasion from Mexico's central plains, which brought the eagle and the serpent that are the central emblems of that region. The decline of Chichén-Itzá began when it lost the civil war with Mayapán, these two, plus Uxmal, having made up the governing trio of the Mayan confederation. Mayapán called on Mexican mercenary warriors for support and destroyed the power of its opponents, carrying them off to live in its midst. Then in 1441 any kind of centralized government in the north of Yucatán seems to have collapsed, as civil war broke the hegemony of the Mayapán House of Cocomina.

So to begin with a description of its temples and other structures: The first is the Sacrificial Cave, situated in the north of the city and today filled with greenish water. On its south side it has a small altar off which the victims were probably thrown, along with ceremonial objects. Despite the quantity already plundered from the waters, the jewelry still safe beneath the water must be fabulous. The cave is 40-60 meters wide, 10 meters high and 20 meters deep. There is another cave on the south side, called Xtoloc, from which drinking water was drawn, but unlike the Sacrificial Cave, in this case the descent is via a gently sloping ramp that reaches the water's edge. The so-called Castle, the city's great pyramid, is more than 500 meters to the south, with a main bridge that overlooks the cave; the two are joined by a causeway six meters wide and five meters above the ground. The Castle is possibly the oldest of the temples still standing; it has 91 steps on each side, a total of 364, thought to represent the days of the year, with a final step above completing the total. Crowning the structure is a poorly finished temple with few engravings, but in a tomb accessed via a covered stone ramp there are sculptures and jewels of great archaeological significance. At the

bottom, a door opens on to an underground stairway, leading to the chamber that contains what Morley considered the greatest archaeological treasure in the Americas (although not in my view): a life-sized red jaguar encrusted with 43 apple-green jade discs supposedly representing the jaguar's spots. Some 100 meters to the east lies the Temple of the Warriors, the most majestic and evocative of Chichén-Itzá's structures, crowned with a number of colonnades featuring the plumed serpent and Chac-Mool in prime position; the latter is a reclining figure of great dignity, its feet tucked in close to its buttocks and holding a plate where offerings are placed.

Next to the Temple of the Warriors are the columns that give the place its name, the Thousand Columns, and then a number of badly damaged structures with two or three ball courts and a steam bath. The main Ball Court, measuring 146 by 36 meters, lies a couple of hundred meters west of the Castle. Two stone hoops are still embedded in the wall through which the solid rubber balls had to be thrown, not with the hands but with elbows or knees. Legend has it that this was so difficult anyone who managed it won the right to remove all the jewelry from those present. On the east side of the Ball Court is the Temple of the Jaguars, with badly deteriorated friezes. Opposite the north face of the Castle is a series of small platforms, known as the Pines, the House of the Eagles and Tzompantli (place of the skulls, where the heads of the sacrificial victims were kept), but these have no great architectural interest. Further to the south, along the present-day road to Mérida, one finds what Morley called the Tomb of the High Priest, and Mexican anthropologists call the Ossuary. It contains a great number of offerings and is one of the few places where pearls have been found (in the new tomb at Palenque there's one that resembles a tear drop). Today only two large heads of plumed serpents and some rectangular columns remain. Next come a number of minor temples, such as the Temple of the Stag and the Temple of Chac Mool, previously known as the Red House, and eventually one reaches the Caracol or Observatory, one of the principal structures in size and significance. The Caracol is the observatory where the Mayas conducted their astronomical research; its two vast platforms support an important building, now partly destroyed: a tower 12 meters tall that one climbs by a narrow spiral staircase. The rays of the sun and moon and the spring and autumn equinoxes pass through an aperture in the tower. At the southernmost point of Chichén-Itzá lies the Nunnery, a partially ruined structure with pretty border decorations and some remnants of friezes. To the east is an unpretentious structure, Akab'Dzib, which also has some small remnants of friezes.

Uxmal is a much later city than Chichén-Itzá, having been founded in the 10th century by a chief of the Xiu family, Ah Zuitok Tutl Xiu,98 of Mexican origin.

Uxmal remained neutral in the wars between Chichén and Mayapán and later helped to overthrow the Mayapán chief in 1441, although Uxmal itself had already been abandoned. It is a truly beautiful city, much more recent than Chichén, although not in the same artistic league as Palenque. It's a shame it has not been as well studied and reconstructed as Chichén has been, for it has structures of great beauty, such as the Governor's Palace, which has been classified as the finest in the Mayan region, although personally I like the quadrangle at the Nunnery better. The Governor's Palace, which is 95 meters long, 12 meters wide and eight meters high, was built with great charm. In Uxmal, the plumed serpent and other Aztec motifs are present, but in my view its mosaic friezes are very similar to the Zapotec or Mixtec work in the region of Mixtec Oaxaca. In a northern corner of the Governor's Palace lies the so-called Temple of the Tortoises, a little archaeological jewel. The quadrangle at the Nunnery is a patio of 80 by 65 meters, enclosed by four wings, entered through a broad trapezoidal domed gate on the southern side. There you face the architecturally very beautiful Temple of Venus (a modern appellation) and the exquisitely executed east and west wings. Beside this structure rises the so-called Temple of the Diviner, which was probably the city's most important ceremonial building. These are the most significant and the best-preserved structures, but there are many others, such as the north and north-east group, the Terrace of the Monuments, the Ball Court, the Cemetery, the west group, the Dovecote, the Great Pyramid, the south group and the Pyramid of the Old Woman, which have not yet been fully cleaned and restored.99

The following day (or rather, that same evening) we set off for Veracruz aboard the Ana Graciela, a little, 150-ton motor boat. The first day went well, but on the next a big northerly blew up and had us flying all over the place. We rested a day in Veracruz and then set off for Mexico City via Córdova, stopping there for an hour to look around. It's no big deal, but still a very pleasant town, more than 800 meters above sea level, with a breeze that is refreshing in the tropical climate, and coffee fields in abundance. The nearby town of Orizaba is much more like the Andes: grim and cold. The Blanco River lies just beyond town, as if it were an extension of the town. It was the site of a historic massacre of workers protesting against their exploitation by a Yankee company. I don't remember the year.

Only two important events. One shows that I am getting old: a girl whose thesis I helped edit included me in the list of those who had helped her (it's customary here to dedicate your thesis to

half the world) and I felt pretty happy. The other was a beautiful experience. I went to Iztacihualt, Mexico's third largest volcano; it was quite a long way, and the journey's novelty value was in the fact that some were traveling on horseback. At first I managed to keep up with the best, but at one point I stopped for five minutes to treat a blister and when I got going again I had to race to catch up with the rest of the column. I did so, but was really feeling it, and in the end I began to tire. Then I had the luck to meet a girl who could go no further, and on the pretext of helping her (she was on horseback), I went along dangling from the stirrup. We eventually reached the tents where we were to spend the night; I got totally frozen and couldn't sleep. When we had arrived the ground was dry, but when we got up the next day there were 30 or 40 centimeters of snow and it was still snowing. We decided to keep going anyway, but we never even made it to the shoulder of the volcano and by 11 a.m. we were on our way back.

The road that had been dusty and rocky on the way up was now covered with snow. Suffering poor circulation in my feet, I was wearing five pairs of socks, and was barely able to walk. A muleteer with a loaded mule passed by me with bare feet, which really gave me a complex. When we reached the woods the scenery was so beautiful, for the snow in the pine trees was quite a magnificent sight and the falling snow further enhanced the beauty. I arrived home exhausted.

Once again to Iztacihualt, after a number of failures. This time it happened thus: At dawn, nine of us arrived at the foot of the slope and began to climb along the edge of La Gubia towards the Ago shelter, crazy to straighten our knees. When we hit the snow, two turned back. I remained in the last group and as we tackled the glacier and saw it was pure ice, the guy accompanying me turned back. I was therefore by myself when I fell, ending up in the ice clutching a shoulder. The fall made me more cautious and I continued very slowly. The guide tried to encourage me by showing me how to climb, but then he fell down. He flew past me like a ball, desperately trying to drive his axe into the ice, and after some 80 meters he did finally come to a stop, close to a precipice from which there was a great leap into the shit. After the guide's thumping crash, we descended very carefully, discovering that it takes longer to go down than up. The guide was exhausted and kept wandering away from the downward path, so it was 6 p.m. by the time we reached the foot of the slope.

A long time has passed and there have been many events not yet recounted. I'll just note the most important one. Since February 15, 1956, I'm a father: Hilda Beatriz Guevara is my firstborn.

I belong to the Roca del CE group of Mexico.

Five jobs I was offered all fell through, so I signed up as a cameraman in a small company and my progress in cinematography has been rapid. My plans for the future are unclear but I hope to finish a couple of research projects. This could be an important year for my future. I've already given up hospitals. I'll write soon with more details.

* * *

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is where the diary ends. What follows are letters sent home describing his life in Mexico prior to his departure for Cuba in November 1956 as part of the guerrilla expedition led by Fidel Castro.

Mexico City
July 15, 1956

Vieja,

I received your letter and it seems as though you have been experiencing a pretty bad bout of depression. It contains a lot of wisdom and many things I didn't know about you.

I'm no Christ or philanthropist, vieja. I'm exactly the opposite of a Christ and philanthropy looks [illegible] to me, but I fight for what I believe in, I fight with all the weapons at my disposal, and I try to lay out the other guy instead of letting myself get nailed to a cross or whatever. As for the hunger strike, you are totally wrong. We started it twice and the first time they freed 21 of the 24 detainees; the second time they announced that they would free Fidel Castro, the head of the movement, which will happen tomorrow, and if they do what they said, only two of us will be left in prison. I don't want you to believe, as Hilda suggests, that the two of us who remain have been sacrificed. We are simply the ones whose papers aren't in order and so we can't access the resources that our comrades can. My plans are to leave for the nearest country that will grant me asylum, which might be difficult given the inter-American fame I've been lumbered with. From there I'll prepare myself for whenever my services are required. I'm telling you yet again that it's likely I won't be able to write for a quite a while.

What really distresses me is your lack of understanding about all this and your advice about moderation, egoism, etc.— in other words, the most execrable qualities an individual could

have. Not only am I not moderate, but I shall try never to be so. And if I ever see in myself that the sacred flame has become a timid little votive flicker, the least I can do is to vomit on my own shit. As for your appeal to moderate egoism, which means common and spineless individualism (the virtues of XX), I have to say that I've tried hard to eliminate him. I don't mean so much the unfamiliar craven type, but the other one, the bohemian, unconcerned about his neighbor, filled with a sense of self-sufficiency because of a consciousness, mistaken or otherwise, of his own strength. During this time in prison, and during the period of training, I totally identified with my comrades in the struggle. I recall a phrase that I once thought was ridiculous, or at least strange, referring to such a total identification between members of a group of combatants, to the effect that the idea of "I" was completely subsumed in the concept of "we." It was a communist moral principle and naturally might look like doctrinaire exaggeration, but it was (and is) really beautiful to have this sense of "we."

(The splotches aren't tears of blood but tomato juice.)

You are deeply mistaken to believe that moderation or "moderate egoism" gives rise to great inventions or works of art. All great work requires passion and the revolution needs passion and audacity in large doses, things we have as collective humankind. Another strange thing I noted was your repeated mention of God the Father. I really hope you're not reverting to the fold of your youth. I also warn you that the SOSs are to no avail: Petit got the wind up, Lezica dodged the issue and gave Hilda (who went there against my orders) a sermon on the obligations of political asylum. Raúl Lynch behaved well from afar, and Padilla Nervo said they were different ministries. They would all help but only on the condition that I abjure my ideals. I don't think you would prefer a living son who was a Barabbas rather than a son who died wherever doing what he considered his duty. These attempts to help only put pressure on them and me.

But you have some clever ideas (at least to my way of thinking), and the best of them is the matter of the interplanetary rocket—a word I like.

Besides, there's no doubt that, after righting the wrongs in Cuba, I'll be off somewhere else; and it's also certain that if I were locked up in some bureaucrat's office or some allergy clinic, I'd be fucked. All in all, I think that this pain, the pain of a mother who's aging and wants her son alive, is a feeling to be respected, and I should heed it, and more than that, I want to attend to it. I would like to see you, not just to console you, but also to console myself in my sporadic and shameful homesickness.

Vieja, I kiss you and promise to be with you if nothing else develops.

Your son,

Che

Mexico City, 15 [probably November 1955]

Dear vieja,

Still on Mexican soil, answering your last letters. I can give you very little news about my life. At the moment, all I do is some gymnastics and read like crazy—particularly what you can imagine— and I see Hilda some weekends.

I've given up trying to get my case resolved through legal channels, so my stay in Mexico will be only temporary. Anyway, Hilda is taking our chiquita to spend the New Year with her family. She'll be there for a month and after that we'll see what happens. My long-term goal is to see Europe and, if possible, live there, but that's becoming increasingly difficult. When one contracts the kind of disease I have, it just keeps getting worse, and is cured only in the grave.

I had a life project, involving 10 years of wandering, then some years of medical study and then, with any remaining time, I would dive into the great adventure of physics.

All that is over. The only thing that is clear is that the 10 years of wandering will probably be longer (unless unforeseen circumstances put an end to my wandering altogether), but it will be very different from what I imagined. Now, when I land in a new country, it won't just be to have a look and visit museums or ruins, but also (because the former will always interest me) to join the people's struggle.

I have read the latest news from Argentina about the refusal to legalize the three new parties and the remnants of the Communist Party. Predictable as this is, the measure is less

symptomatic than everything else that has been happening in Argentina for some time. All its actions display such a clear tendency—to favor one caste or class—that there can be no mistake or confusion. That class is the national landowning class, allied with foreign investors, as always.

If I say these rather harsh things to you, it is a case of "beating you because I love you." Now comes a hug, one of my last from Mexico, and since I'm making admonitions, here is a final one: The only lament of the mother of the Maceo brothers[100] was that she had no more sons to offer to Cuba. I don't ask that much from you, only that my price, or the price of seeing me, does not cost you your convictions, or that you won't regret it one day.

Chau

[No date][101]

Dear vieja,

I'm writing from somewhere in Mexico, waiting for things to resolve themselves. The air of freedom is, in reality, the air of clandestinity, but never mind, it adds an intriguing cinematic touch.

I'm in great health and with even greater optimism. As to your judgments about the liberators, I see that little by little, almost without wanting to, you are losing confidence in them.

That thing about trust and your firm objection is one of the most tragic things you've written, but don't worry, I won't show anyone. Just imagine what the Egyptian newspapers are saying, for example, imagine the "West's loss of trust." It's logical that they have much more confidence in a fiefdom belonging to them than in a real country, even one without an independence project.

The oil won't be Argentine either. The bases they so feared Perón would provide will be provided by them; or at least they will grant a similar concession. Freedom of speech is now the new myth—we used to have a Peronist myth, now we have a myth of liberation. In this way the newspapers screw everyone. By the time general elections come around they will have banned the Communist Party and will be trying everything in their power to neutralize Frondizi, who is the best that Argentina can hope for. In the end, vieja, the perspective I see from here is quite desolate for the Argentine poor, that is, for the majority of the population.

Anyway, I have very little time to write and don't want to waste it on such matters. In reality, however, I don't have much to tell you about my own life—all I do is exercise and read. I think I'll come out of this quite invincible in terms of understanding economics, even if I have forgotten to take my own pulse and check for vital signs (I never did that well). My path seems to be slowly but surely diverging away from clinical medicine, but not so far that I am not nostalgic for hospitals. What I told you about the physiology professorship was a lie, but not a big one. A lie because I was never going to accept it, but the offer was real and the likelihood they would have given it to me high, since I had an interview appointment and everything. Anyway, that's all history. Saint Karl has acquired a new recruit.

I can't say anything about the future. Write and tell me the family news, which is very refreshing in these latitudes.

Vieja, a huge kiss from,

your clandestine son.

[Approximately October 1956]

Dear Mamá,

Your prickly son of a bad mother is not, on top of everything else, a good-for-nothing; he's like Paul Muni who said what he had to say in that tragic voice, and disappeared into the distance, his shadow lengthening to the tune of such an evocative soundtrack.[102] My current profession means I am always on the go, here today, there tomorrow, etc., and my relatives… well I haven't been to see them because of this (and also, I confess, because I probably have more in common with a whale than with a bourgeois married couple employed at the kinds of worthy institutions I would wipe from the face of the earth if I got the chance to do so. I don't want you to think that this is just a passing aversion; it's real mistrust. Lezica has shown that

we speak different languages and have no common points of reference.) I have given you this lengthy bracketed explanation because, after my opening line, I thought you might imagine I'm on the way to a becoming a morfa-burgués.[103] *Being too lazy to start over and remove the paragraph, I embarked on a lengthy explanation that now strikes me as rather unconvincing. Full stop, new paragraph.*

Within a month, Hilda will go to visit her family in Peru, taking advantage of the fact that she is no longer a political criminal but a somewhat misguided representative of the admirable and anticommunist party the APRA. I'm in the process of changing the focus of my studies: whereas previously I devoted myself for better or worse to medicine, and spent my spare time informally studying Saint Karl [Marx], this new stage of my life demands that I change the order. Now Saint Karl is primordial; he is the axis and will remain so for however many years the spheroid has room for me on its outer mantle. Medicine is more or less a trivial and passing pursuit, except for one small area on which I'm thinking of writing more than one substantive study—the kind that causes bookstore basements to tremble beneath its weight.

As you'll recall, and if you don't remember I'll remind you now, I was working on a book on the role of the doctor, etc., of which I only finished a couple of chapters that whiffed of some newspaper serial with a title like Bodies and Souls.[104] *They were nothing more than poorly written rubbish, displaying a thorough ignorance of the fundamental issues, so I decided to study. Again, to write it, I had to reach a series of conclusions that were kicking against my essentially adventurous trajectory, so I decided to deal with the main things first, to pit myself against the order of things, shield on my arm, the whole fantasy, and then, if the windmills don't crack open my nut, I'll get down to writing.*

I owe Celia the letter of praise I will write after this if I have time. The others are in debt to me as the last word has been mine, even with Beatriz. Tell her that the papers arrive like clockwork and that they give me a very good idea of all the government's beautiful deeds. I cut out the articles carefully, following the example of my pater, and now Hilda is emulating her mater. A kiss for everyone, with all the appropriate additions and a reply—negative or positive, but convincing—about the Guatemalan.

Now all that remains is the final part of the speech, which refers to the man, which could be titled: "What next?" Now comes the tough part, vieja, the part I've never shunned and always enjoyed. The sky has not darkened, the stars have not fallen out of the sky, nor have there been terrible floods or hurricanes; the signs are good. They augur victory. But if they are wrong—and in the end even the gods can make mistakes—I think I'll be able to say, like a poet you don't know: "I shall carry beneath the earth only the sorrow of an unfinished song." To avoid pre-mortem pathos, this letter will appear when things get really hot, and then you'll know that your son, in some sun-drenched land in the Americas, is swearing at himself for not having studied enough surgery to help a wounded man, and cursing the Mexican government for not letting him perfect his already respectable marksmanship so he could knock over puppets with better results. The struggle will be with our backs to the wall, as in the hymns, until victory or death.

Another kiss for you, with all the love of a farewell that still resists being total.

Your son

[approximately November 1956]

Dear Tita [Infante],

So much time has passed since I last wrote to you that I have lost the confidence that came from our regular communication. (I'm certain you won't understand much of my letter. I'll explain everything to you little by little).

First, my little Indian girl is now nine months old. She's quite cute, full of life, etc.

Second and most important: A while back some Cuban guys, revolutionaries, invited me to help the movement with my medical "knowledge," and I accepted, because you probably know that this is the kind of work which me piace [I like]. I went to a ranch in the mountains to direct the training, vaccinate the troops, etc., but I got unlucky (a Cubanism) and the police nabbed us all. And because my papers were suspect (a Mexicanism) I had to swallow two months in jail, and besides that, they stole my typewriter and some other stuff, hence this handwritten

missive. Then the government committed the grave error of believing my word as a gentleman, and they freed me on the proviso that I would leave the country within 10 days. Three months later I'm still hanging around, even though I'm underground and with no prospects in Mexico. I'm just waiting to see what happens with the revolution: if it works out well, I'll head for Cuba; if not, I'll start to look for a country where I can set up camp. This year my life could change drastically, but this has already happened so many times that I'm not too scared or bothered by it.

Of course, all my scientific jobs fell through and now I'm just an assiduous reader of Charlie and Freddie[105] and others like them. I forgot to tell you that when I was arrested they found several little books in Russian and a card from the Institute for Mexican-Russian Exchange, where I was studying the language in connection with the problem of conditioned reflexes.

It might interest you to know that my marriage has almost completely broken down, and will be definitely next month. My wife is going to Peru to see her family, from whom she has been separated for eight years. There is a certain bitterness in the break-up, as she was a loyal compañera and her revolutionary conduct was irreproachable during my enforced vacation. Our spiritual discord was too great, however, and I live with this anarchic spirit that leads me to dream of new horizons the moment I feel "the cross of your arms and the earth of your soul," as Pablito [Neruda] said.[106]

I'll sign off now. Don't write to me until after the next letter, which will have more news or at least a fixed address.

An ever affectionate hug from your friend,

Ernesto

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1. *Northern Argentina, near the border with Bolivia.*
2. *In English in the original.*
3. *Alberto Granado accompanied Ernesto on his first trip around Latin America; Carlos Ferrer (Calica) was his companion on this second trip that began on July 7, 1953.*
4. *Land reform and the nationalization of the tin mines were the key demands of the Bolivian people after the revolution of April 9, 1952, led by the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) under the presidency of Víctor Paz Estenssoro.*
5. *Pedro Domingo Murillo was a Bolivian national hero (from La Paz) and signatory to the Declaration of Independence on July 16, 1809; Melchor Guzmán was a national hero from Cochabamba who launched the cry for liberty on September 14, 1810; and Gualberto Villarroel was the nationalist president of Bolivia (1943-46) who was assassinated.*
6. *Isaías Nougués was an anti-Peronist exile and one of the most outstanding figures in the Argentine colony in Bolivia. Contact was made with him through his son José María whom Ernesto met on a train during this trip.*
7. *Ernesto later wrote a poem, "To the Bolivian Miners" (see Appendices).*
8. *Ernesto's stay in Bolivia lasted more than a month, although the dates do not appear in his passport. A letter to his mother from Cuzco, dated August 22, 1953 (reproduced below), indicates that he left La Paz on August 7.*
9. *The De Guia Leprosy Colony. Both Dr. Pesce and his assistant Zoraida Boluarte had offered support during Ernesto's first trip around Latin America with Alberto Granado, so he visited them when he returned to Lima.*
10. *Berta Gilda (Tita) Infante was a fellow medical student at the University of Buenos Aires and an active member of the Argentine Communist Youth as well as a close friend.*
11. *They arrived in Ecuador on September 27, 1953, and passed through immigration on September 28.*
12. *The Argentine students were Andro Herrero, Eduardo (Gualo) García and Óscar Valdovinos.*
13. *Dr. Jorge Maldonado Reinilla.*
14. *Dr. Fortunato Safadi.*
15. *Velasco Ibarra was elected president of Ecuador several times.*
16. *See the letter to his mother from Guayaquil, dated October 21, 1953.*
17. *The boat on which Ernesto enrolled while still a medical student as a medical orderly on a trip round the Caribbean in 1950.*
18. *The trio now consisted of Gaulo García, Andro Herrera and Ernesto. Calica had left for Venezuela.*
19. *In a letter of October 21, 1953, Ernesto estimates that he will reach Panama between October 29 and 30. The departure was on October 25 but Ernesto's passport doesn't show these dates.*
20. *The daughter of a Panamanian member of parliament.*
21. *During his time in Panama, a report about the visit of Ernesto Guevara and Eduardo García appeared in the paper, La Hora, on November 10, 1953. (See appendices.)*
22. *Ernesto's article was published as "Un vistazo a las márgenes del gigante de los ríos" ("A View from the Banks of the Giant of Rivers") in the Sunday supplement of Panamá-América, November 22, 1953. The other article referred to was published as "Machu-Picchu, enigma de piedra en América" ("Machu-Picchu: Stone Enigma of the Americas") in the weekly supplement of Siete, December 12, 1953. (See appendices.)*
23. *All members of the Panamanian Students Federation.*
24. *The date of Ernesto's arrival in Costa Rica was December 1, 1953, according to his passport.*
25. *The United Fruit Company.*

26. *The article titled "Experimento Extraordinario es el que se Realiza en Bolivia" was published in El Diario de Costa Rica on December 11, 1953. (See appendices.)*
27. *Carlos Prío Socarrás was the president of Cuba who was overthrown by General Batista in March 1952. José (Pepe) Figueres was the president of Costa Rica.*
28. *At this point Ernesto traveled on to Nicaragua on December 22, 1953.*
29. *They arrived in Guatemala between December 23 and 24, 1953.*
30. *Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) or the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance was founded by the controversial Peruvian politician Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre in 1924.*
31. *A Venezuelan exile with whom Ernesto later had contact in Mexico.*
32. *The "gringo" was Professor Harold White; after the revolution he was invited to Cuba by Che and he stayed there until his death in 1968.*
33. *Hilda Gadea was an APRA exile from Peru who later became Ernesto's first wife.*
34. *Alfonso Bawer Pais was a communist exile from Honduras who had been a fellow student of Jacobo Árbenz at the Polytechnic College.*
35. *The eminent Nicaraguan intellectual Edelberto Torres Rivas. His children, Edelberto and Myrna, became friends with Ernesto and supporters of the Cuban revolution.*
36. *José Méndez Zebadúa was a founding member of the Communist Party of Guatemala (PGT).*
37. *A Honduran exile. After the fall of Árbenz, they met again in Mexico. Ernesto dedicated his poem "Invitación al camino" to her. (See appendices.)*
38. *The APRA leader Nicanor Mujica Álvarez was part of the Peruvian exile community in Guatemala.*
39. *This is the first mention in the diary of the Cubans who mounted the attack on the Moncada and Bayamo barracks in July 1953, some of whom were then in Guatemala. Ernesto had contact with them through Myrna Torres, the daughter of Edelberto Torres, who was a friend of Hilda Gadea.*
40. *Myrna Torres recalls this party was on Sunday January 24, 1954, and the girl was a teacher, Norma Cabrera.*
41. *José Manuel Vega Suárez, alias Cheché.*
42. *Confederación General de Trabajadores de Guatemala (the Guatemalan trade union federation).*
43. *Jaime Díaz Rozzoto was the private secretary at the president's office.*
44. *The Guatemalan Institute of Social Security.*
45. *See appendices.*
46. *After the fall of Árbenz, Gutiérrez continued the struggle for the liberation of his homeland. He was disappeared in March 1966 along with the so-called Group of 28, to which Myrna Torres's husband, Humberto Pineda Aldana, also belonged and who was also assassinated. Ernesto met Myna's husband Humberto in the Argentine embassy after the coup against Árbenz.*
47. *Myrna confirmed this festival was on February 13, 1954, on the banks of lake Amatitlán.*
48. *Carlos Manuel Pellecer, a peasant leader, was affiliated to the Communist Party. He later renounced the left and ultimately became a CIA agent.*
49. *The youth festival was held at Chimaltenango on February 20-21, 1954, organized by the Guatemalan Democratic Youth*
50. *Sara de la Serna was an aunt, the sister of Ernesto's mother.*
51. *Antonio (Ñico) López was one of the group that attacked the Moncada barracks in July 1953 and was later an expeditionary on the Granma. Because of his left-wing ideas, he became a close friend of Ernesto. He died in the Cuban revolutionary war.*
52. *Myrna left on March 21, 1954.*
53. *Dr. Juan Angel Núñez Aguilar, a Honduran agronomist and economist, who at the time was president of the Instituto de Fomento de la Producción de Guatemala (INFOP).*
54. *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Educación de Guatemala (Guatemalan Union of Educators).*
55. *The Vietnamese independence movement inflicted a major defeat on French colonial forces in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu (March-May, 1954).*
56. *An undated letter to Ernesto's family explains the details of what happened. In his book, Aquí va un soldado de América, Ernesto's father, Ernesto Guevara Lynch, suggests this is around April 1954.*
57. *(Sic) Stanley H. Boggs.*
58. *Sylvanus G. Morley was a US archeologist famous for his work in Central America, in particular, in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras. He wrote several classic texts on the subject, including The Inscriptions of Petén and The Ancient Maya.*
59. *Construction of this highway began after the Guatemalan revolution with the goal of making a new bridge and an alternative railway line because the existing railroad was owned by North Americans.*
60. *Ernesto often used the term vieja (old lady) as an affectionate form of addressing his mother.*
61. *Argentine slang for peso.*
62. *A character in a novel by the famous French writer Anatole France.*
63. *A member of APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) in Peru.*
64. *Dr. Carlos Tejedas.*
65. *Partido Demócrata Revolucionario and the Partido de la Revolución Guatemalteca.*
66. *Partido de la Revolución Nacional and the Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (Communist Party).*
67. *Che (a common Argentine form of address) plus Bol(shevik).*
68. *Carlos Castillo Armas established a brutal dictatorial regime in Guatemala until he was assassinated in 1957 by one of his bodyguards, Romero Vázquez Sánchez, in the presidential palace.*
69. *This was not true. Reyes Flores was not executed but lived for at least another 20 years in Cuba after the revolution.*
70. *John Foster Dulles later became US Secretary of State under President Eisenhower.*
71. *Argentina's national day.*
72. *José Manuel Vega Suárez, a Cuban exile living in Guatemala.*
73. *The Cadet Academy (also known as the Polytechnic College) was founded in 1873 and was the training institute for the cadres of the constitutional army. In 1954, the cadets mutinied against Castillo Armas and the school was closed for three years. Turcios Lima was a member of this group and in 1960 he led a rebellion against the repressive government. He later*

initiated an armed struggle in Guatemala but was killed in 1966.

74. *This observation was vindicated some years later when Pellecer renounced his past communist affiliation in his book, Mi renuncia al comunismo.*
75. *A water bird found in the Río de la Plata area.*
76. *Roberto Castañeda is currently a professor of ballet.*
77. *Getulio Vargas, Brazilian president 1930-45 and 1950-54, established the populist "New State" that oscillated between reform and repression. Just before committing suicide on August 24, 1954, he denounced what he described as the "plunder of Brazil" by foreign companies.*
78. *Víctor Manuel Gutiérrez was a teacher who was disappeared in March 1966 as one of the Group of 28.*
79. *Roberto Murailles was assassinated in 1981.*
80. *Father of Humberto and Luis Arturo Pineda.*
81. *He arrived in Mexico on September 18, 1954.*
82. *Known as "El Patojo" ("Shorty") because of his short stature. He lived in Cuba after the 1959 revolution, then joined the liberation struggle in Guatemala and was killed in action. Che gives an affectionate portrait of him in Reminiscences of the Cuban Revolutionary War (Ocean Press, 2006).*
83. *Ulises Petit de Murat, a scriptwriter and old friend of Ernesto's father (Ernesto Guevara Lynch).*
84. *The Latin News Agency was funded directly by the Argentine government.*
85. *This was Alfonso Pérez Vizcaino.*
86. *This was to cover the Pan-American Games, which took place in Mexico between March 12 and 16, 1955. Ernesto was an accredited Agencia Latina reporter from January 31 to December 31, 1955.*
87. *The motion of proteins (electrically charged molecules) in the presence of an electrical field.*
88. *A reference to a relative of the Guevaras.*
89. *Frondizi was the key leader of the Unión Cívica Radical Intransigente who assumed the presidency on May 1, 1958. He was overthrown by a military coup on March 29, 1962. Ironically, it was Che Guevara's visit to Argentina in August 1961, after attending the famous meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay, that was used as the pretext for the coup.*
90. *The official paper of the Argentine Communist Party.*
91. *The Pan-American games were held March 12-16, 1955.*
92. *Two Cubans exiled in Mexico.*
93. *A paper presented at the Ninth National Congress of Allergists, held at the León School of Medicine, University of Guanajuato, April 25-30, 1955. The paper was later published in the Revista lberoamericana de Alergología, Mexico City, May 1955, p. 157.*
94. *This is Ernesto's first mention of Fidel Castro. The meeting took place towards the end of July 1955 in Mexico City.*
95. *They married at Tepoztlán on August 18, 1955.*
96. *See the letter (above) to his mother dated September 24, 1955.*
97. *After the 1959 Cuban revolution, Orfila maintained close relations with Che and always expressed his solidarity with Cuba.*
98. *Ernesto notes that in his book on Mayan civilizations, Morley calls him "Hun Uitzil Chac Tutul Xiú."*
99. *The photos included in this book taken by Ernesto of these Mayan ruins reveal a high level of technical and artistic ability.*
100. *Mariana Grajales was the mother of General Antonio Maceo, who led the struggle for independence against Spain in the 19th century.*
101. *This letter probably dates from August or September 1956, after Ernesto's release from prison.*
102. *The reference is to the film "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang," in which Paul Muni played the leading role.*
103. *Argentine slang meaning a lazy bourgeois who does nothing but eat.*
104. *Corps et âmes [Bodies and Souls] was a book written by the French writer Maxence Van der Meersch.*
105. *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.*
106. *The reference is to Pablo Neruda's poem A Song of Despair.*

Appendices

A View from the Banks of the Giant of Rivers[1]

The Amazon, with its cortege of tributaries, forms an enormous brown continent in the middle of the Americas. During the long rainy months, all of the water courses increase in volume in such a way that the river invades the jungle, turning it into the home of creatures of the water and the air. Beasts of the earth seek refuge on the spots of land that emerge from the water on the brown savannah. Alligators and piranhas (or *caneros*) are the new, dangerous guests of the Tronda, replacing the ocelots, jaguars and peccaries in the task of preventing human beings from setting up camp in the jungle.

Ever since that time long ago when the fearful and famished hosts of Orellana looked upon this muddy sea and in their makeshift boats followed it to the sea, millions of conjectures have been made about the exact birthplace of the giant. For a long time, the Marañón was considered the true source of the river, but modern research has erred toward the other powerful tributary, the Ucayali. By patiently tracing its banks and dividing it up into ever smaller affluents, the researchers came to a tiny lake high in the Andes that feeds the Apurimac, at first a tinkling stream and then a powerful voice of the mountain, thus justifying its Quechua name *apurimac,* which means the "great roarer." This is the birthplace of the Amazon.

But who remembers the pure mountain streams here, where the river has become so colossal and its vast silence increases the mystery of the jungle night? We are in San Pablo, a colony of patients suffering from Hansen's disease [leprosy] that the Peruvian government maintains at the margins of its territory and which we are using as a base of operations to enter the heart of the forest.

In all the images of the jungle, whether Hudson's polychrome paradises or José E. Rivera's somber tones, the smallest and most terrible of enemies, the mosquito, doesn't feature. In the evening, a shifting cloud floats over the water of the rivers and launches itself at whatever living thing happens to be passing. It's far more dangerous to enter the jungle without a mosquito net than without a weapon. The fierce carnivores won't readily attack a human being; not all of the swamps one must wade through are inhabited by alligators or piranhas; nor do the snakes fling themselves on travelers to inject them with their venom or strangle them in a mortal embrace. But the mosquitoes will most certainly attack. They will bite you inexorably all over your body and, in exchange for your blood, they leave troublesome welts and maybe yellow fever or, more frequently, the malaria parasite.

You have to look down at a micro level to see the enemy. Another powerful and invisible one is the anchylostorna, a parasite whose larvae bore their way through the skin of your bare feet and then travel throughout your body to settle in your digestive tract, sucking your blood and causing the very serious anemia from which nearly all the inhabitants of this region suffer to a greater or lesser extent.

We walk through the jungle, following the meandering of an Indian path, heading for the huts of the Yaguas, the indigenous people of the region. The forest is huge and terrifying; its sounds and silences, its furrows of dark water and the clear drops that drip from the leaves—all its so well-orchestrated contradictions— eventually reduce anyone walking to an infinitesimal speck with no thought of their own. To escape from its powerful influence, you have to fix your gaze on the broad, sweaty neck of your guide or on the footprints on the floor of the forest that indicate the presence of humans and recall the strength of the community. When all our clothes were stuck to our bodies and several streams had poured from our foreheads, we reached the settlement. A small number of huts built on posts in a clearing in the jungle and a thicket of yucca, are its wealth—an ephemeral wealth that must be abandoned when the rain swells the veins of the jungle and the water pushes people toward higher ground. The harvest of yucca and palm nuts, the basis of the Indian diet, will enable them to survive.

During the day, the Yaguas live in open-sided houses with palm-frond roofs and a platform that raises them from the humidity of the soil, but, at nightfall, the plague of mosquitoes is stronger than their stoical hides and the evil-smelling oil they smear on their bodies, and they have to seek refuge in huts made of palm fronds, which they close hermetically with a door made of the same material. As long as it is dark, all the members of the tribe remain in their refuge. The promiscuity in which the night is spent doesn't bother them, because the moral codes that govern us don't mean anything

in their tribal world. I approached the door of a hut, and a stench of strange oils and sweaty bodies immediately repelled me.

The life of these people is reduced to meekly following the orders that nature imparts by means of the rain.

In the winter, they eat yucca and the potatoes they have harvested in the summer, and they go out in their dugout canoes to fish among the thickets of the jungle. It is fascinating to see them: They have a vigilant immobility that nothing disturbs, small harpoons poised in their right hands. The dark water obscures everything, until suddenly there's a quick movement, and the harpoon is plunged into the deep; the water is agitated for a moment, and then you can see only the tiny buoy at the end of the harpoon, tied to the rod by one or two meters of line. Powerful strokes of the paddle keep the canoe close to the float until the fish becomes too exhausted to struggle.

They also hunt, when the period is favorable. Sometimes they use an old shotgun obtained through who knows what strange transaction to bring down a large animal, but in general, they prefer to use silent blow-pipes. When bands of monkeys pass through the foliage, a small arrow whose point is smeared with curare wounds one of the monkeys. Without even a cry, the monkey extracts the arrow and continues on its way for a few meters, until the poison takes effect and it falls from the trees— alive, but unable to emit a sound. As long as the noisy troop of monkeys is passing, the blow-pipes are used constantly, and the hunters note the points in the foliage where the wounded animals have fallen. When the last monkey has departed the scene of the tragedy, the hunters retrieve all the wounded animals and take their contribution of food back to the community.

Celebrating the arrival of their white visitors, they presented us with one of the monkeys they had killed. We prepared the animal on an improvised spit in the way it is done on our Argentine pampas and tried its meat, which was tough and bitter but had an agreeable, wild taste. The Indians were enthusiastic about our method of preparing the dish.

To reciprocate, we gave them two bottles of a soft drink we had brought with us. The Indians drank the contents excitedly and saved the caps with religious fervor in the pouches of woven fibers that they wear around their necks, which is where they keep their most prized possessions: an amulet, some shotgun cartridges, a seed necklace, a Peruvian sol, etc.

On our return, somewhat anxious about the approaching night, one of them led us along shortcuts that enabled us to reach the safe refuge of the metal roofs of the colony before night fell. We said good-bye with a handshake, in the European style, and the guide gave me a present of one of the fibers from his skirt, the only clothing worn by the Yaguas.

The dangers and tragedies of the wild have often been exaggerated, but we had an experience that shows how valid the warnings are. People always say that it's dangerous to wander away from the path when you're in the jungle, and that is certainly true. One day, while relatively close to our base, we suddenly looked at each other in consternation because the path we had hoped to return by seemed to have vanished. We carefully retraced our steps, but it was all in vain.

While one of us stood in a fixed spot, another walked straight ahead and then returned, guided by shouts. We did this in every direction without success. Fortunately, we had been told what to do in case we found ourselves in such a situation. We looked for a special kind of tree, whose roots form partitions a few centimeters thick, which sometimes rise to heights of several meters from the earth and seem to give extra support to the tree.

With an ordinary stick, we began to strike those partitions as hard as we could. This produced a deep sound which, although not very loud, could be heard at a great distance and is much more effective than shooting off a firearm, for the foliage deadens the sound of shots. After a while, an Indian with a mocking smile appeared with his shotgun and, with signals, led us to the path and showed us the direction we should take. Somehow, we had strayed off course about 500 meters from the path.

It is generally imagined that the jungle is a lush paradise full of food, but that is not true. A knowledgeable local will never die of hunger, but, if others carelessly get lost in the forest, they will have serious problems finding food to eat. None of the kinds of tropical fruits that we know grow spontaneously there. To sustain oneself on wild plants, you have to resort to certain roots and palm fruits that only an experienced person can differentiate from others that look the same but are poisonous. Hunting is extremely difficult for someone who can't identify a broken twig as the trail of a boar or deer, who doesn't know the watering places and who doesn't know how to move through the jungle without making a sound. Fishing in a place where the density of aquatic animals is so great is still a very complex art, since the possibility of a fish biting the hook is remote, and it is far from easy to harpoon them. But, when the soil is cultivated, what enormous pineapples, papayas and bananas! A little work is rewarded with tremendous results.

And yet the spirit of the jungle seems to overpower its inhabitants and merge them with itself. Nobody works, unless it is necessary in order to eat. Like the monkeys that seek their daily sustenance in the branches without thinking about tomorrow, or the wild cats that kill only to satisfy

their hunger, the colony works only enough to keep themselves from starving.

The days sped by, filled with scientific work, excursions and hunting. The night before we were to leave, two canoes filled with leprosy patients drew close to the pier in the healthy part of the colony to express their affection for us. Their leonine faces in the torchlight were an impressive spectacle in the Amazonian night. A blind singer sang some *huaynitos* and *marineras*, while the motley orchestra did wonders to accompany him. One of the patients gave a farewell speech to thank us; his simple words conveyed a deep emotion that enhanced the impact of the night. For those simple souls, the mere fact that we had come to visit them, even out of curiosity, made us deserving of their gratitude. The serenade and farewell ended with embarrassing grimaces as they attempted to express their affection without shaking hands because the health laws categorically forbid physical contact between the patients and the healthy. The music and the farewell cemented our commitment to them.

The small raft on which we continued our river journey was crammed with gifts of food from both the members of the colony and from the sick, who competed in giving us the most food, the sweetest papaya and the fattest chicken. Then a little push toward the middle of the river, and we were talking to the river alone.

> The song of the jungle
> and the pain that is there
> come over the river
> on the rafts that arrive.
> The hardened boatmen
> come drowning their sorrow
> over the bloody routes
> of the spiraling river.

We drifted down the river for two days, waiting for the moment when we would see Leticia, the Colombian city we wanted to reach, but there was a serious drawback—we couldn't steer the hulk. Everything was fine as long as we were in the middle of the river, but whenever we tried to draw close to the bank, we had a furious battle with the current—which always emerged victorious, keeping us in the middle until, at a whim, we were allowed to reach whichever shore the river chose for us.

On the night of the third day, we finally saw the lights of the town—but the raft continued on its way unperturbed, in spite of every effort we made. Whenever it seemed as if we were about to win, the logs of the raft would make a pirouette and head once more toward the middle of the current.

We struggled until we could no longer see the lights upstream and were about to take refuge under the mosquito net, abandoning the guard duty we did occasionally, when the last chicken—the tasty dinner we were longing for—took fright and fell into the water. The current carried it a little faster than it carried us. I stripped off my clothes and was about to jump in after it—one or two strokes would take me to it, and then all I'd have to do would be to wait for the raft to catch up—but I hesitated. I don't really know why; it may have been the enigmatic river or the subconscious thought of an alligator. But, in any case, the chicken sailed on down the river, while I, raging inwardly, kept promising myself that I would jump in and then holding off again, until I gave up. Frankly, the nocturnal river scared me; I was a coward in the face of nature. Later, both of us were extremely hypocritical, consoling each other about the poor chicken's terrible fate.

When we woke up, we were aground on the Brazilian side, many paddling hours from Leticia. But we did manage to get back there, thanks to the proverbial kindness of the people living along the gigantic river.

When we flew out in the Colombian Armed Forces Catalina, we looked down on the immense jungle. From above, it seemed like an enormous green cauliflower barely broken by the brown thread of a narrow river, extending for thousands of kilometers and hours of flying time. We saw that our months-long intimate friendship had been with only an infinitesimal part of the gigantic Amazonian continent, and this realization had us lowering our heads in reverence.

Far below, the spirit of Canaima, God of the Jungle, emerging from the foliage and floating on the rivers, raised his hand in a gesture of farewell.

Published in the *Panamá-América* Sunday supplement, November 22, 1953.

1. This article narrates some of his experiences during his first journey, in 1952, described in *The Motorcycle Diaries*.

Machu-Picchu: Stone Enigma of the Americas[1]

Crowning a hill of steep and rugged slopes, 2,800 meters above sea level and 400 above the fast-flowing River Urubamba that bathes three sides of this peak, is the ancient city in stone that, by extension, has been given the name of the place that is its bastion: Machu-Picchu.

Is this its original name? No. In Quechua, Machu-Picchu means ""Old Mountain," as opposed to Huaina-Picchu, the rocky needle rising just a few meters from the settlement, which means Young Mountain. They are simply physical descriptions of the topographical features of the place. What would its real name be then? Let us diverge for a moment and travel back to the past.

The 16th century of our age was a tragic time for the indigenous peoples of the Americas. The bearded invader flooded the continent and the great indigenous empires were reduced to rubble. In the center of South America, the internecine struggle for power between the two candidates to inherit the crown of the deceased Huaina Capac, Atahualpa and Huascar, made the business of destroying the greatest empire of the continent even easier.

In order to contain the human mass approaching perilously close to Cuzco, one of Huascar's nephews, the youthful Manco II, was placed on the throne by Spain. This maneuver had an unexpected consequence: although the indigenous people now had a visible head, bestowed with all the formalities of Inca law still possible under the Spanish yoke, the monarch was not as easy to control as the Spaniards wished. He disappeared one night with his leading chiefs, bearing with him the great disc of gold, symbol of the sun, and from that day onward, there was no peace in the old capital of the empire.

There was no security, moving from one place to another was not safe. Armed bands used the ancient, impressive and now-destroyed Sacsahuamán as their base, the fortress guarding Cuzco. They roamed the territory and even moved in on the city.

It was 1536.

This large-scale revolt failed, the siege of Cuzco had to be abandoned, and another major battle at Ollantaitambo, the walled city on the banks of the River Urubamba, was lost by the troops of the indigenous monarch. The threat of the guerrilla war, which had been a considerable thorn in the side of Spanish might, was definitively reduced. One day, in a drunken outburst, one of the conquistador soldiers, a deserter who had been brought to the indigenous court along with six of his companions, killed the Inca sovereign. He and his unfortunate compatriots were put to a horrible death by the indigenous subjects, who displayed their severed heads on their spears as both punishment and challenge. The sovereign's three sons, Sairy Túpac, Tito Cusi and Túpac Amaru, reigned consecutively and died while in power. With the third, however, something more than a monarch passed into death: it was the final demise of the Inca empire.

The forceful and inflexible viceroy, Francisco Toledo, took this last sovereign as his prisoner and had him executed in Cuzco's parade ground in 1572. The Inca king, whose life—secluded in the temple of the sun virgins, with a brief parenthesis as sovereign— ended so tragically, addressed his people in his final hour. His potent speech roused them from their former torpor and meant that his name would be taken up again by the precursor of the independence of the Americas: José Gabriel Condorcanqui, Túpac Amaru II.

The danger to the representatives of the Spanish crown had been extinguished and nobody thought to seek out the old operational base of the Incas, the well-concealed city of Vilcapampa, whose last sovereign had left before being taken prisoner. Thus began a period of three centuries in which total silence reigned over the city. When an Italian man of science, Antonio Raimondi, devoted 19 years of his life to traveling all over the country in the second half of the 19th century, Peru was a land still largely untouched by the European. Although it is true Raimondi was not a professional archaeologist, his profound erudition and scientific skills gave an enormous impetus to the study of the country's Inca past. Generations of Peruvian students now turned their eyes to the heart of a country they did not know, guided by the monumental work *El Perú*, while scientists from all over the world once again recovered their enthusiasm for investigating the history of a once great people.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a US historian, Professor Bingham, who had come to Peru to study the route taken by [Simón] Bolívar, was captivated by the extraordinary beauty of the regions he visited and tempted by the provocative questions raised by Inca culture. Professor Bingham, satisfying both the historian and the adventurer within him, set out in search of the lost city, the operational base of the insurgent monarchs.

Bingham knew, from the chronicles of Father Calancha and others, that the Incas had a political and military capital they named Vitcos, and a more distant sanctuary called Vilcapampa, the city where no white person had ever set foot. Armed with this information, he set out on his search.

Anyone with even a superficial knowledge of the region will not be unaware of the magnitude of the task he had set himself. In mountainous terrain, covered with dense, subtropical forest, crisscrossed by rivers that were more like highly dangerous torrents, not knowing the psychology or even the language of its inhabitants, Bingham set off with three powerful weapons: an indomitable zest for adventure, keen intuition and a healthy fistful of dollars.

Patiently, paying a price in gold for each secret or piece of information he could extract, he penetrated the heartland of the extinct civilization. One day in 1911, after years of arduous labor, routinely following an Indian who was selling an unusual set of stones, Bingham, unaccompanied by any other white man, found himself marveling alone at the impressive ruins that, surrounded and almost submerged in undergrowth, were there to welcome him.

There is a sad side to this story. The undergrowth was cleared from the ruins, which were then studied and perfectly described… and totally stripped of whatever objects that were uncovered. Researchers triumphantly bore off to their country more than 200 crates of archaeological treasures that were both invaluable and, let us be clear about this, worth a great deal of money. Bingham is, objectively speaking, not specifically guilty of this and neither are the citizens of North America guilty in general. Nor can anyone blame a government without the resources to support an expedition on a scale comparable to that of the discovery of Machu-Picchu. Is no one guilty then? Let us just accept the fact that the answer to the question of where one might study or admire the treasures of the indigenous city is obvious: in the museums of North America.

Machu-Picchu was not just any old discovery for Bingham. It was the triumphant crowning of an overgrown child's limpid dreams—like the dreams of almost every amateur in this area of science. A long series of triumphs and failures culminated there, and the city of gray stone encompassed all his fantasies and his visions, propelling him into comparison and conjecture that was at times far removed from careful and empirical demonstration. The years of exploration and those that followed his success made an erudite archaeologist of the formerly itinerant historian; many of his assertions, backed by the formidable experience acquired in his travels, were taken as gospel truth in scientific circles.

In Bingham's view, Machu-Picchu was the ancient abode of the Quechua people and the center from which they expanded before founding Cuzco. He delved into Inca mythology and identified three windows of a ruined temple as those from which the Ayllus brothers, characters in Inca mythology, had emerged. He found conclusive similarities between a circular tower in the newly revealed city and the Cuzco sun temple. He identified skeletons that had been found in the ruins, almost all of them female, as being those of the sun virgins. Finally, after carefully analyzing all the possibilities, he came to the following conclusion: The city he had discovered had been named Vilcapampa more than three centuries earlier. This, he said, had been the sanctuary of the rebel monarchs, and had previously served as a refuge for the vanquished followers of the Inca leader Pachacuti (whose body lay in the city) from the time of their defeat by Chincha troops until the resurgence of the empire. But the reason this city had in both cases been the refuge of vanquished warriors was because this was Tampu-Toco, sacred place and initial nucleus, located here and not at Pacaru-Tampu, near Cuzco, as Indian notables told the historian Sarmiento de Gamboa, who interrogated them on the orders of Viceroy Toledo.

Modern researchers have disagreed on many points with the archaeologist from North America, but they have nothing conclusive to say about the significance of Machu-Picchu.

After several hours the train, an asthmatic thing, almost a toy, that runs first along a small river to continue later along the banks of the Urubamba, passing the stately ruins of Ollantaitambo, eventually comes to the bridge crossing the river. A winding track of some eight kilometers climbs 400 meters above the torrent, bringing us to the hotel in the ruins, which is run by a Señor Soto. He is a man of extraordinary knowledge in Inca matters, and a good singer, who, in the delicious tropical evenings, contributes to enhancing the suggestive charms of the ruined city.

Machu-Picchu is constructed on the top of a mountain, covering an area of some two kilometers in perimeter. It is basically divided into three sections: that of the two temples, another for the main residences and an area for the common people.

In the section reserved for religious activities are the ruins of a magnificent temple made of great blocks of white granite, with the three windows that gave rise to Bingham's mythological

speculations. Adorning a series of beautifully constructed buildings is the Intiwatana, where the sun is moored: a stone finger some 60 centimeters high, the basis of indigenous rites and one of few such pieces still standing since the Spaniards were careful to destroy this symbol upon conquering any Inca fortress.

The buildings that housed the nobility show examples of extraordinary artistic value, for example the circular tower I have already mentioned, the sequence of bridges and canals cut into the stone and the many residences that are notable for the execution of their stonemasonry.

In the dwellings presumably occupied by the plebeians, one notes a great difference in the rough finish of the rock. They are separated from the religious part of the complex by a small square, or flat area, where the main water reservoirs—now dried up—were located, this supposedly being one of the main reasons for abandoning the place as a permanent residence.

Machu-Picchu is a city of steps with almost all of its constructions on different levels, united by stairways, some of exquisitely carved rock, and others of stones aligned without much aesthetic zeal. But all of them, like the city as a whole, were capable of standing up to the rigors of the weather, and lost only their roofs made of tree trunks and straw, unable to resist the assault of the elements.

Dietary needs were satisfied by vegetables planted in the terraces that are still perfectly conserved.

It was very easy to defend, surrounded on two sides by almost vertical slopes, a third passable only along readily defendable tracks, while the fourth faces Huaina-Picchu. This peak towers some 200 meters over its brother. It is difficult to climb, and would be almost impossible for the tourist, were it not for the remains of the Inca paving enabling one to edge to its peak along sheer precipices. The place seems to have been more for observation than anything else, since there are no major constructions. The Urubamba River encircles the two peaks almost completely, so they are almost impossible for attacking forces to conquer.

I have already noted that the archaeological meaning of Machu Picchu is disputed, but the origin of the city is not the vital thing and, in any case, it is best to leave the debate to specialists.

Most important and irrefutable is that here we have found the pure expression of the most powerful indigenous civilization in the Americas—still untainted by contact with conquering armies and replete with immensely evocative treasures between its walls that have deteriorated from the tedium of having no life among them. The spectacular landscape circling the fortress supplies an essential backdrop, inspiring dreamers to wander its ruins aimlessly; Yankee tourists, bound by their practical worldview, might place those members of the disintegrating tribes they encounter in their travels among these once-living walls, unaware of the moral distance that separates them, because the subtle difference can only be grasped by the semi-indigenous spirit of the Latin American.

Let us agree, for the moment, to give the city two possible meanings: one for the fighter, pursuing what is today described as a chimera, with an arm reaching toward the future and a stone voice crying out to be heard all over the continent: “Citizens of Indo-America, reconquer the past!” And for others, those who with a desire to be “far from the madding crowd,” there are some appropriate words jotted down by a British subject in the hotel visitors’ book, conveying all the bitterness of imperial yearning: “I am lucky to find a place without Coca-Cola propaganda.”[2]

Published in the weekly supplement to *Siete* (Panama), December 12, 1953.

1. This article was written after Ernesto revisited the historic Inca site of Machu-Picchu in 1953.
2. Written in English in the original.

The Dilemma of Guatemala[1]

Anyone who has traveled these lands of the Americas will have heard the disdainful pronouncements of some people about certain regimes with clearly democratic leanings. These sentiments date from the Spanish Republic and its fall. At that time they said the republic consisted of a mob of layabouts who knew only how to dance the *jota*, and that Franco established order and exiled communism from Spain. Time polished such opinions, standardizing criteria, and the words used, like stones thrown at any moribund democracy, went along the lines of, "That wasn't liberty, but the rule of libertines."

The governments that in Peru, Venezuela and Cuba had held out the dream of a new era for the Americas were thus defined. The price that democratic groups in these countries have had to pay for their apprenticeship in the techniques of oppression has been high. A great number of innocent victims have been immolated to maintain an order required for the interests of the feudal bourgeoisie and foreign capital. Patriots now know that victory will have to be achieved by blood and fire, that there can be no forgiveness for traitors, and that the total extermination of reactionary groups is the only way to ensure the rule of justice in the Americas.

When I once again heard the words "rule of libertines" used to describe Guatemala, I feared for the small republic. Does it mean that the resurrection of the dream of the Latin American people, embodied by this country and by Bolivia, is condemned to go the way of its precursors? Herein lies the dilemma.

Four revolutionary parties constitute the support base of the government and all of them, except for the Guatemalan Workers' Party [PGT] are fragmented into two or more antagonistic factions that fight among themselves even more viciously than with their traditional feudal enemies, forgetting in their domestic squabbles the aspirations of the Guatemalan people. Meanwhile, the reactionary forces spread their nets wide. The US State Department and the United Fruit Company —one never knows which is which in that country to the north—in open alliance with the landowners and the spineless, sanctimonious bourgeoisie—are making all kinds of plans to silence a proud adversary that has emerged for them like a boil on the bosom of the Caribbean. While Caracas awaits orders that will open the way for more or less barefaced interference, the displaced little generals and the craven coffee growers seek to make alliances with other dictators in neighboring countries.

And while in the adjoining countries the fully muzzled press can only sing the praises of the "leader" on the only note permitted them, what pass for "independent" newspapers here unleash a farrago of long, involved stories about the government and its defenders, creating whatever climate they want. Democracy permits this.

The "beachhead of communism," setting a magnificent example of freedom and ingenuity, allows them to undermine their own nationalist foundations, permitting the destruction of yet another of Latin America's dreams.

Look back a little at the immediate past, compañeros, and observe the leaders who have had to flee, the murdered or imprisoned members of APRA [American Popular Revolutionary Alliance] in Peru, of Democratic Action in Venezuela, and look at the magnificent young Cubans assassinated by Batista. Draw close to the 20 bullet-wounds in the body of the poet soldier, Ruiz Pineda, and look at the miasmas of the Venezuelan prisons. Look fearlessly, but with care, at this past that serves as an example, and answer this question: is this the future of Guatemala?

Has the struggle been, is the struggle, for this? The historic responsibility of those who must fulfill the hopes of Latin America is great. The time for euphemism is over. It is time that garrote answers garrote. If one must die, let it be like Sandino and not like Azaña.2

May treacherous guns be grasped not by Guatemalan hands. If they want to kill freedom, let it be the other side that does it, those who hide freedom away. We must do away with feebleness and refuse to pardon treason. Let not the unshed blood of a traitor cost the lives of thousands of brave defenders of the people. The old dilemma of Hamlet has come to my lips, in the words of a poet from Guatemala-America: "Are you or are you not, or who are you?" Let the groups that support the government answer this.

This article was first published in the book compiled by Ernesto Guevara Lynch, *Aquí va un soldado de América*, (1987).

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1. According to his father, this article (along with a bundle of letters, books and various other papers) was sent to Argentina when he left Guatemala for Mexico in September 1954.
2. Here the author draws a parallel between Augusto César Sandino, the assassinated Nicaraguan revolutionary, and Manuel Azaña, the impotent president of the Spanish Republic in 1936.

A los mineros de Bolivia*

One 9th of April

Es el trueno y se desboca
con inimitable fragor.
Cien y mil truenos estallan,
y es profunda su canción.
Son los mineros que llegan,
son los mineros del pueblo,
los hombres que se encandilan
cuando salen al sol,
y que dominan el trueno
y aman su recio fragor.

¿Qué la metralla los siega
y la dinamita
estalla
y sus cuerpos se disfunden
en partículas de horror,
cuando llega alguna bala
hasta el ígneo cinturón?

¡QUÉ IMPORTA!;
Es el trueno y se desboca
con inimitable fragor.
Cien mil truenos estallan,
y es profunda su canción.
Por la boca del trueno
Se oye volar el valor.
Son los mineros de acero,
son el pueblo y su dolor.

Salen de una caverna
colgada en la montaña.
Son enjambres de topos
que llegan a morir
sin miedo a la metralla.
Morir, tal la palabra
que es norte de sus días;
morir despedazado,
morir de silicosis,
morir animizado,
morir lenta agonía
en la cueva derrumbada.

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* To the Bolivian miners

Invitación al camino*

For Helena Leyva

Hermana, falta mucho para llegar al triunfo

Hermana, falta mucho para llegar al triunfo.
El camino es largo y el presente incierto;
¡el mañana es nuestro!
No te quedes a la vera del camino.
Sacia tus pies en este polvo eterno.

Conozco tu cansancio y tu desazón tan grandes;
Sé que en el combate se te opondrá tu sangre
y sé que morirás antes que dañarla;
A la reconquista ven, no a la matanza.

Si desdeñas el fusil, empuña la fe;
si la fe te falla, lanza un sollozo;
si no puedes llorar, no llores,
pero avanza, compañera,
aunque no tengas armas y se niegue el norte.

No te invito a regiones de ilusión,
no habrá dioses, paraísos, ni demonios
—tal vez la muerte oscura sin que una cruz la marque—
Ayúdanos hermana, que no te frene el miedo,
¡vamos a poner en el infierno el cielo!

No mires a las nubes, los pájaros o el viento;
nuestros castillos tienen raíces en el suelo.
Mira el polvo, la tierra tiene
la injusticia hambrienta de la esencia humana.
Aquí este mismo infierno es la esperanza.

No te digo allí, detrás de esa colina;
no te digo allí, donde se pierde el polvo;
no te digo, de hoy, a tantos días visto…
Te digo: ven, dame tu mano cálida
—esa que conocen mis enjugadas lágrimas—
Hermana, madre, compañera… ¡CAMARADA!
este camino conduce a la batalla.

Deja tu cansancio, deja tus temores,
deja tus pequeñas angustias cotidianas.
¿Qué importa el polvo acre?, ¿qué importan los escollos?
¿Qué importa que tus hijos no escuchen el llamado?
A su cárcel de *green-backs* vamos a buscarlos.
Camarada, sígueme; es la hora de marchar…

December 1954

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* An invitation to travel

Dos estudiantes de Argentina visitaron anoche a "La Hora"

Visitaron ayer la redacción de "La Hora" los estudiantes argentinos Eduardo García, de la facultad de Derecho de la Universidad del Plata, y el Dr. Ernesto Guevara especialista en alergia y lepra.

Los jóvenes mencionados por medio de las páginas del periódico diferente saludan a los estudiantes panameños. La permanencia de los estudiantes argentinos en esta ciudad será corta. Su viaje es de buena voluntad y piensan visitar varios países de Centro América.

News report in *La Hora* (Panama), November 10, 1953: "Two Argentine students visited the offices of *La Hora* last night."

"Experimento Extraordinario es el que se Realiza en Bolivia"

"Con una capacidad mínima, el país está haciendo cosas dignas de encomio".— Anotaciones de viaje de dos jóvenes argentinos que recorren el continente por tierra

Eduardo Paul García, de 26 años y Ernesto Guevara Serna, de 25, son dos jóvenes argentinos que dejaron por un tiempo sus estudios — el primero los realiza en la Facultad de Leyes de la Universidad de la Plata y el segundo es doctor en medicina — para emprender un viaje por tierra a través de todo el continente americano.

Su jira tiene el único propósito de ampliar el ámbito de su cultura general y de estudiar a fondo, en el propio terreno y sin ulteriores pretensiones, los problemas que afectan a los países indoamericanos.

Salieron, en enero del año que ya va a terminar, de Buenos Aires, Cuatro integraban la aventurada peregrinación: uno ha debido quedarse en Ecuador, otro se encuentra ya en Guatemala y Paul García y Guevara Serna van por la mitad del camino.

Su itinerario ha comprendido, hasta ahora, a Bolivia, Perú, Ecuador y Panamá. Recorrerán todo Centro América y finalizarán el viaje en México.

Mil dólares les ha costado hasta lo presente la jira. Ellos mismos, con su trabajo y con sus ahorros, la han financiado.

A ambos interesan, particularmente, los estudios de arte autóctono. Guevara Serna tiene especial interés en ponerse en contacto con médicos especialistas en leprología para cambiar impresiones sobre métodos de tratamiento y profilaxis.

"El país que más nos ha impresionado es, sin duda alguna, Bolivia. Durante los dos meses que estuvimos recorriendo la zona minera y otras regiones importantes de su territorio, nos hemos impuesto del estado de gestación en que se encuentran sus instituciones. El experimento es de lo más interesante y valioso que puede haber. Con una capacidad mínima se realizan empresas extraordinarias, que están produciendo una profunda transformación en múltiples aspectos de la vida política, social y económica de Bolivia. Y tanto es así que todos los países del hemisferio tienen los ojos puestos en aquella pujante y revolucionaria República".

"Nuestro interés por los asuntos arqueológicos nos ha llevado a admirar, en toda su grandeza, el Machu-pichu, ciudad perdida cerca de Cuzco, en Perú, donde una gran civilización histórica tuvo su asiento. Todos los americanos deberían conocerla".

"Deseamos presentar por medio de DIARIO DE COSTA RICA un saludo muy cordial a este bello país. Agradecemos profundamente a los habitantes de Golfito su cálido recibimiento. Fue en aquel puerto donde empezamos a disfrutar de la hospitalidad tica, que tiene tanta y tan bien ganado fama en Suramérica".

Los señores Paul García y Guevara Serna permanecerán en San José por espacio de una semana. Esperamos les sea grata su estada.

News report in *El Diario de Costa Rica*, December 11, 1953: "An extraordinary experiment underway in Bolivia." This article quotes "two young Argentines," Ernesto Guevara and Eduardo García.

Más Aprehensiones de Conjurados Cubanos que se Dice Tenían Apoyo de Comunistas

El Coronel Bayo Giroud Está Dispuesto a Entregarse y a Responder de Todo el Plan

Importantes detalles arrojaron ayer las investigaciones acerca de la conjura para derrocar al Presidente de Cuba, Fulgencio Batista, cuya muerte también fué planeada.

1o.—El movimiento revolucionario para el cual eran preparados aquí en forma secreta técnicos y oficiales, fué patrocinado o inspirado por organizaciones comunistas, según la DFS.

2o.—Seis conjurados más, cubanos, han sido detenidos por la Dirección Federal de Seguridad, que se negó a confirmar oficialmente el dato.

3o. El líder Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz y su hermano Luis, intentaron ampararse contra la aprehensión, el día de su captura.

4o. El coronel español Alberto Bayo Giroud —prófugo que está señalado como preparador militar del grupo sedicioso— está dispuesto a entregarse a la policía y se hace responsable del movimiento descubierto aquí.

5o. La DFS amplió sus investigaciones "hasta capturar a otra treintena de conjurados que figura en una lista que fué hallada en poder de Castro Ruz", así como para conocer los alcances del movimiento.

UN MEDICO ARGENTINO LIGADO CON COMUNISTAS

Concretamente, la DFS reveló anoche que el médico argentino Ernesto Guevara Serna, es el principal nexo que tenía el grupo de conjurados cubanos, con ciertas organizaciones comunistas de tipo internacional.

(Guevara Serna se halla en México desde 1955, a raíz de que fué expulsado junto con un grupo de políticos guatemaltecos, tras de la caída del ex Presidente de Guatemala Jacobo Arbenz.

El doctor Guevara —quien también ha figurado en otros movimientos políticos de carácter internacional en la República Dominicana y en Panamá— fué identificado por la DFS como "miembro activo del Instituto de Intercambio Cultural Mexicano-Ruso".

Guevara Serna, en la fracasada conjura descubierta aquí, era el jefe de personal del grupo "26 de Julio".

Al decir de unos investigadores, cuyos nombres no se nos autorizó a revelar, "existen entre los detenidos otros agentes del comunismo internacional y se sospecha que el grupo "26 de Julio" era copatrocinado por comunistas y cubanos".

MAS CONSPIRADORES CUBANOS DETENIDOS

Aun cuando los altos funcionarios de la DFS se negaron a "confirmar oficialmente" la aprehensión de más conspiradores, en los círculos policíacos se insinuó anoche que habían sido aprehendidos otros seis cubanos, entre ellos los hermanos Erasmo y Efrén Rivera Flores. El primero propietario del Rancho de Santa Rosa, localizado en Ayapango, Jurisdicción de Chalco, Méx., donde los cubanos recibieron esas preparación militarmente para una futura revolución que debería estallar dentro de mes y medio. El segundo, es propietario de un automóvil Chevrolet modelo 1939 con placas 7 94 56 que le fué recogido de las cercanías del "Rancho Rosa". Efrén Rivera Flores tiene su domicilio en Dr. Jiménez número 164, casa que es tá abandonada.

Sin embargo, "extraoficialmente" un alto funcionario insinuó "que tal vez habría en los arqueos unos tres o cuatro detenidos más, cuya relación con la conjura trajaría no queda plenamente comprobada".

LOS CONJURADOS ESTAN SENTENCIADOS A MUERTE

La aprehensión de los 22 conspiradores cubanos y el fracaso de su plan fué producto de investigaciones minuciosas todos ellos se han negado a revelar datos a la policía.

Lo anterior, al decir del director de la DFS, coronel Leandro Castillo Venegas y del capitán Fernando Gutiérrez Barrios que dirigió las investigaciones, se debe a que todos ellos "están sentenciados a muerte por Castro Ruz".

News report in *Excelsior* (Mexico), June 27, 1956: "More arrests of Cuban conspirators said to be supported by communists." This reports on the arrest of the Argentine doctor, Ernesto Guevara de la Serna, along with a group of Cubans for conspiring to overthrow and assassinate President Fulgencio Batista of Cuba.

Calcula la policía que el grupo "26 de Julio" había invertido ya poco más de medio millón de pesos en armas, cartuchos, dinamita y otros explosivos, para el adiestramiento de los 50 "futuros oficiales" que más tarde dirigirían la revolución contra Batista.

Ayer, en el despacho del coronel Castillo Venegas fué concentrado parte del armamento que utilizaban los cubanos en sus prácticas en el Rancho de Santa Rosa.

Allí figuran los tres fusiles militares 30-06 de fabricación nacional, que son motivo de mayor preocupación para la DFS, dado que tales armas no están en venta en las armerías locales.

Al respecto, el capitán Gutiérrez Barrios indicó que se ahondarán las investigaciones, inclusive desde que tales fusiles salieron de la Fábrica Nacional de Armas.

Empero, insinuó que armas de ese tipo se hallan en poder de deportistas tiradores pertenecientes a ciertos clubes registrados oficialmente y que tal vez, por ese medio las adquirieron.

BAYO GIROUD, DISPUESTO A ENTREGARSE A LA POLICIA

Por otra parte, se afirmó extraoficialmente que el prófugo coronel español Alberto Bayo Giroud —veterano de la guerra civil española que adiestraba a los cubanos en Santa Rosa— envió una carta a la DFS, en la que dice "estar dispuesto a entregarse" y menciona a Fidel Castro Ruz como un "simple director político del grupo, cuyas actividades no tienen por que ser penalizadas".

(El hijo del coronel Bayo Giroud, el piloto aviador Alberto Bayo, también se halla detenido, según confirmación de la DFS).

Reveló el capitán Gutiérrez Barrios, que en el reglamento para "Residencias" elaborado por Castro Ruz se menciona, que "cualquier delación o indiscreción queda penada por la muerte". En ese reglamento, recogido de la casa de Emparan 49, también se detalla que los conjurados "deben obrar en forma independiente y evitar sostener entrevistas en público". Esto es, que jamás deberían ser vistos en grupo.

El golpe policíaco fué dado en forma repentina, y por ello se encontró la lista de los integrantes del Grupo Liberal "26 de Julio".

Las aprehensiones fueron realizadas por el capitán Gutiérrez Barrios y los jefes Luis Bazet Marín y Fausto Morales Juárez, así como los agentes Jesús Villaseñor Ramírez, Fernando González Gutiérrez, Julio Couttolenc Cortés y Juan Orozco González.

Por su parte, el subdirector de la DFS, licenciado Suárez Torres ratificó que "se presume que el movimiento contra Batista tiene ramificaciones".

Posiblemente, en el curso de las investigaciones será recogido más armamento.

Suárez Torres dijo que en una plática con Castro Ruz, éste le indicó que "existen varios millones de dólares, en armas ocultas en Cuba".

PIDIERON AMPARO FIDEL Y LUIS CASTRO RUZ

Ayer se informó en el Juzgado Segundo Penal de Distrito, que Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz y su hermano menor Luis, solicitaron amparo el pasado 21 del actual, contra su aprehensión. Ese mismo día, a las 12 horas, Castro Ruz fué capturado junto con otros cuatro cubanos. En la demanda de amparo los Castro Ruz aseguraban que "estaban en Mé-

Sólo Quedan Presos Ruz, Guevara y Otros que sí Violaron la ley

Diecinueve de los extranjeros detenidos por la conjura para asesinar al general Fulgencio Batista, Presidente de Cuba, fueron puestos en libertad por la Secretaría de Gobernación, ayer a las 20 horas, pero sujetos a vigilancia especial mientras se decide qué se hará en cada caso.

¿El subsecretario del ramo, licenciado Fernando Román Lugo, informó lo anterior, y señaló que la liberación condicionada se concedió después de que cada uno de los conspiradores declaró nuevamente y se levantó el acta respectiva.

Agregó que la Secretaría, en este caso, ha ajustado todos sus actos a la Ley General de Población, y que ha procedido de acuerdo con las facultades de que está investida en materia migratoria.

Gobernación ordenó la libertad de los detenidos, previa comprobación de que aun estaban dentro del plazo que les otorga la ley para permanecer en el país, al que entraron como turistas.

Solamente quedaron detenidos el licenciado Fidel Castro Ruz, Ernesto Guevara, Calixto García y Santiago Hirzel, por estar probado que violaron flagrante y ostensiblemente la Ley General de Población, pues aun cuando solamente podían permanecer en México seis meses, llevaban casi un año en el país, y en estos casos la Secretaría procederá de acuerdo con sus facultades.

A LAS 17:30 EMPEZARON LAS DILIGENCIAS

Las diligencias para poner en libertad a los detenidos se iniciaron desde las 17:30 horas, en la Estación Migratoria de las calles de Miguel E. Schula 138, con la presencia de los funcionarios autorizados por la Secretaría, y previa comunicación a los liberados, de que todos sus actos deberán ajustarse a la Ley, y que su salida estaba condicionada a estricta vigilancia de sus actos y las medidas que habrán de tomarse por considerarlas pertinentes, en su oportunidad y en cada caso.

Es decir, que quedan sujetos a las leyes migratorias, independientemente de la acción que deba ejercerse posteriormente por las actividades que dieron motivo a su detención y que comprenden otro aspecto en el terreno delictuoso.

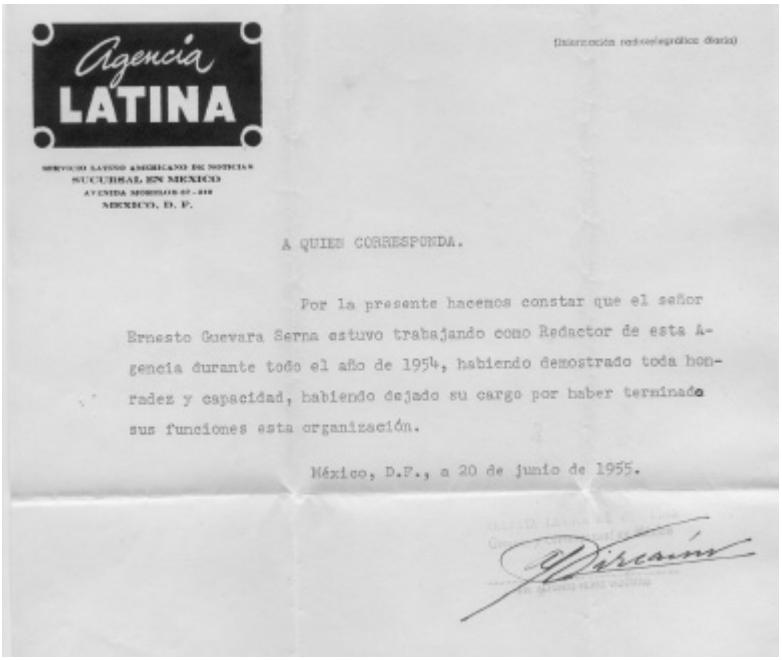
La libertad se concedió a las siguientes personas: Luis Crespo Castro, José Raúl Vega, Alberto Bayo Cosgaya, Agueda F. Aguilar Rodríguez, Tomás Electo Pedroza Pinto, Celso Maragotto Lara, Rolando Santana Reyes, Oscar Rodríguez Delgado, Cándido González Mireles, José Almeida Bolque, Reinaldo Benítez

LA DEFENSA TRATARA DE LIBERAR A LOS OTROS

Ayer mismo, el licenciado Ignacio Mendoza Iglesias, que encabeza a los defensores de los conspiradores, y que presentó las demandas a nombre de éstos, ante el juez federal Lavalle Fuente, expresó que continuaría sus actividades para lograr la libertad de Castro Ruz, Guevara, García y Hirzel.

Señaló que estos cuatro, lo mismo que los diecinueve liberados, se encuentran amparados por el juez primero penal de Distrito, y que exigirá que se cumpla tal resolución judicial, pues Gobernación persiste en violar la protección federal de la justicia otorgada a sus defensos.

News report in *Excelsior* (Mexico) July 11, 1956: "Only Ruz, Guevara and others remain in detention for violating the law." This reports that of the group of "conspirators" arrested the previous month, only Fidel Castro Ruz, Ernesto Guevara and two others are still in prison in Mexico.



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SERVICIO LATINO AMERICANO DE NOTICIAS
SUCURSAL EN MEXICO
AVENIDA MORELOS 67 - 310
MEXICO, D. F.

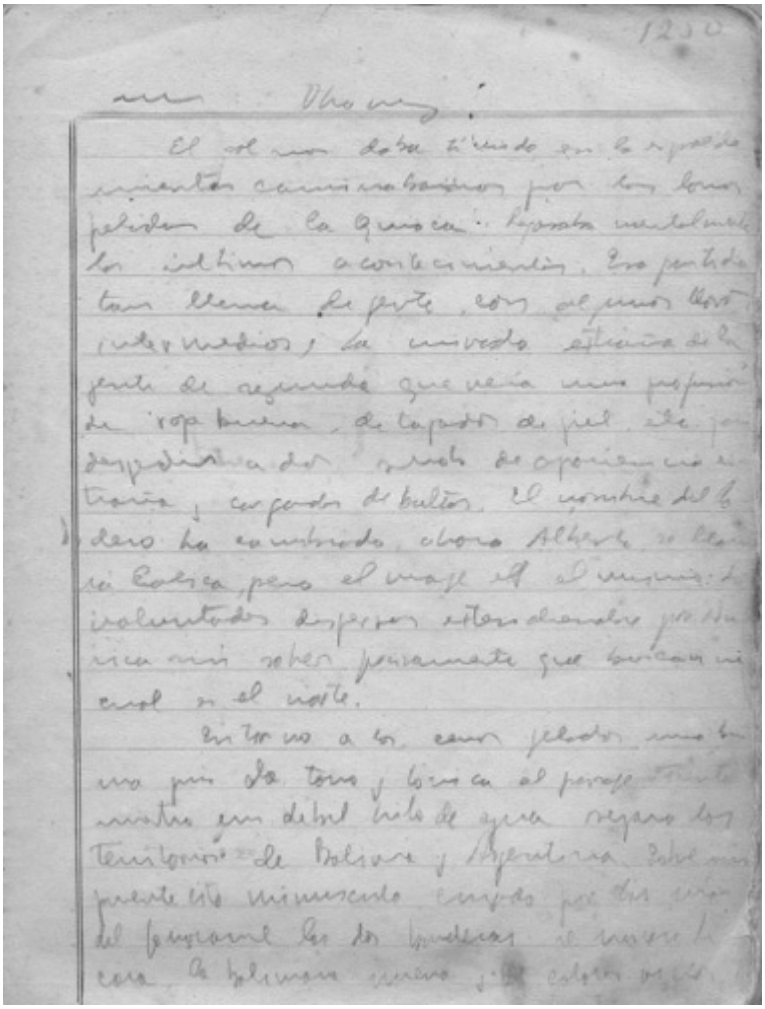
(Información radiotelegráfica diaria)

A QUIEN CORRESPONDA.

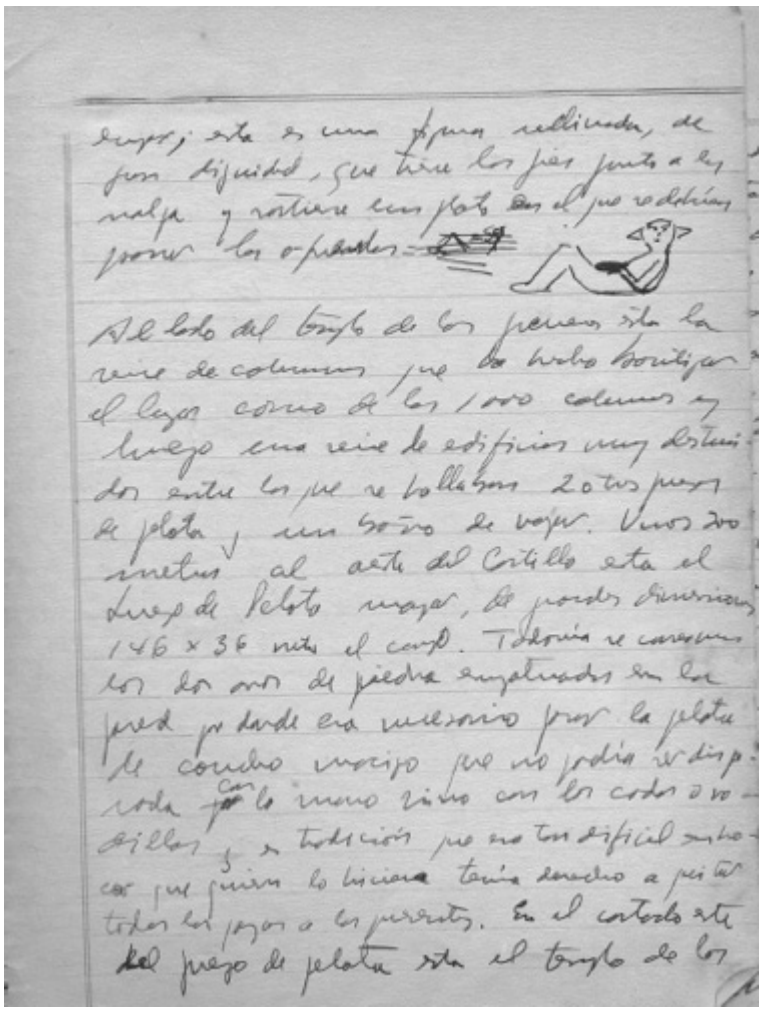
Por la presente hacemos constar que el señor Ernesto Guevara Serna estuvo trabajando como Redactor de esta Agencia durante todo el año de 1954, habiendo demostrado toda honradez y capacidad, habiendo dejado su cargo por haber terminado sus funciones esta organización.

México, D.F., a 20 de junio de 1955.

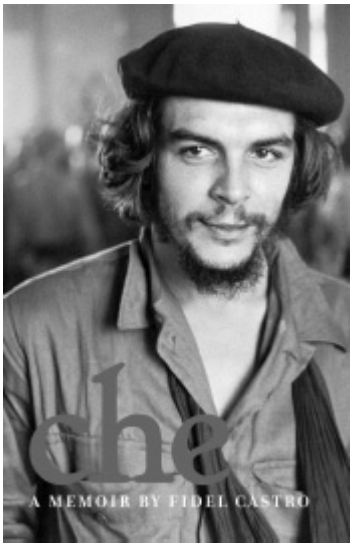
Ernesto Guevara's job reference from the Agencia Latina dated June 20, 1955, confirming he worked for the agency during 1954 and demonstrated "honesty and ability."



Facsimile of the first page of the diary Ernesto titled “Otra Vez.”



Facsimile of the page of the diary with Ernesto's sketch of a chac-mool.



CHE: A MEMOIR BY FIDEL CASTRO

Fidel Castro

In this unique political memoir, Fidel Castro writes with great candor and emotion about a historic revolutionary partnership that changed the face of Cuba and Latin America. Fidel creates a vivid portrait of Che Guevara—the man, the revolutionary, and the intellectual—revealing much about his own inimitable determination and character.

This fascinating memoir includes Fidel's speech on the return of Che's remains to Cuba 30 years after his assassination in Bolivia in 1967, and provides a frank assessment of the Bolivian mission.

"For me, it has always been hard to accept the idea that Che is dead. I dream of him often, that I have spoken to him, that he is alive."

—Fidel Castro

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Writings on Politics and Revolution

Edited by David Deutschmann

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"Che was the most complete human being of our age."

—Jean-Paul Sartre

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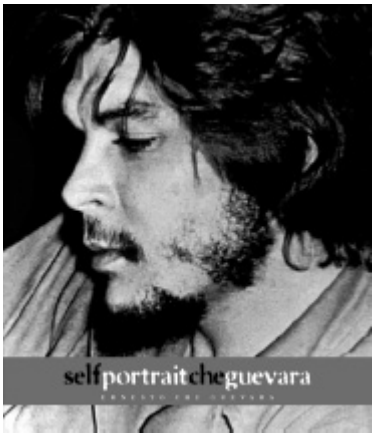

SELF-PORTRAIT
A Photographic and Literary Memoir

Ernesto Che Guevara

A remarkable photographic and literary memoir offering an intimate look at the man behind the icon that draws on the rich seam of diaries, letters, poems, journalism, and short stories Che Guevara left behind in Cuba.

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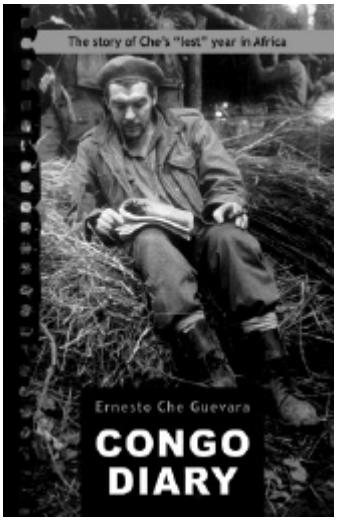

CONGO DIARY
The Story of Che Guevara's "Lost" Year in Africa

Ernesto Che Guevara

Che Guevara's disappearance from Cuba in 1965 aroused much speculation. In preparation for the fateful Bolivian mission, Che led a secret Cuban force to aid the liberation movement in the Belgian Congo (later known as Zaire) after Patrice Lumumba was assassinated there.

Unpublished for decades because of its controversial content, this account of Che 's "lost" year in Africa reflects his great literary gift, his characteristic insightfulness, his dry wit and brutal honesty.

"Che Guevara's feats in our continent were of such magnitude that no prison or censorship could hide them from us. His life is an inspiration for every human being who loves freedom. We will always honor his memory." **—Nelson Mandela**

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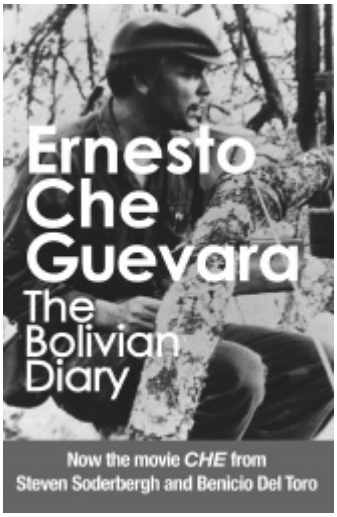

THE BOLIVIAN DIARY

Ernesto Che Guevara

This is Che Guevara's famous last diary, found in his backpack when he was captured by the Bolivian army in October 1967. It became an instant international bestseller after his death, catapulting Che to iconic status throughout the world.

Newly revised by Che's widow (Aleida March), and including a thoughtful preface by his eldest son Camilo, this is the definitive account of the attempt to spark a continent-wide revolution in Latin America.

The Bolivian Diary was the basis of Steven Soderbergh's movie "Che Part 2: Guerrilla," starring Benicio Del Toro as Che Guevara.

"Thanks to Che's invariable habit of noting the main events of each day, we have rigorously exact, priceless, and detailed information on the heroic final months of his life in Bolivia." **—Fidel Castro**

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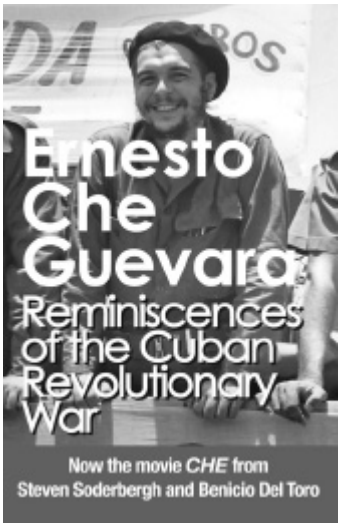

REMINISCENCES OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Ernesto Che Guevara

The dramatic art and acute perception of Che Guevara's early diaries blossom in this highly readable and entertaining account of the guerrilla movement against the Batista dictatorship that led to the 1959 Cuban revolution.

This new, thoroughly revised edition reveals how this revolutionary war transformed not just a nation struggling against appalling poverty and oppression but Che himself, who begins as troop doctor and ends as a guerrilla commander, who will become a world-famous revolutionary.

This book was the basis of Steven Soderbergh's movie "Che Part 1: The Argentine," starring Benicio Del Toro as Che Guevara.

"Reflects the life of an extraordinary and important man." ***—Library Journal***

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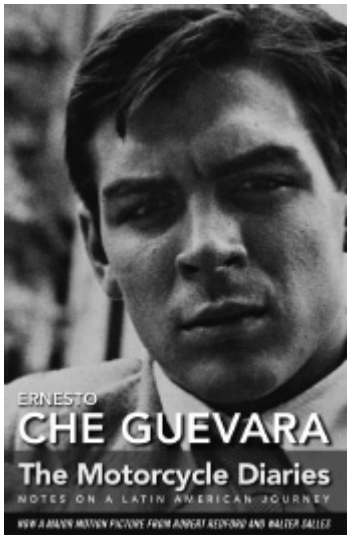

THE MOTORCYCLE DIARIES

Notes on a Latin American Journey

Ernesto Che Guevara

The book of the movie of the same name by Walter Salles starring Gael García Bernal.

The young Che Guevara's lively and highly entertaining travel diary features exclusive, unpublished photos taken by the 23-year-old Ernesto on his journey across a continent, and a tender preface by Aleida Guevara, offering an insightful perspective on her father—the man and the icon.

"A journey, a number of journeys. Ernesto Guevara in search of adventure, Ernesto Guevara in search of America, Ernesto Guevara in search of Che. On this journey of journeys, solitude found solidarity, I turned into we." **—Eduardo Galeano**

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